

The book cover features a dynamic composition of the Philippine and Iranian flags. The Philippine flag, with its blue, white, and red horizontal stripes and a yellow sun and stars, is on the left. The Iranian flag, with its green, white, and red horizontal stripes and a red emblem, is on the right. The background is a deep blue with faint, swirling white lines. The title 'PHILIPPINE-IRAN RELATIONS' is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters, slanted upwards from left to right. Below it, the subtitle '50 Years and Beyond' is written in a smaller, yellow, sans-serif font, also slanted upwards. At the bottom, the editor's name 'edited by HENELITO A. SEVILLA, JR., Ph.D.' is printed in white. The overall design is modern and professional, reflecting the historical and diplomatic nature of the book's content.

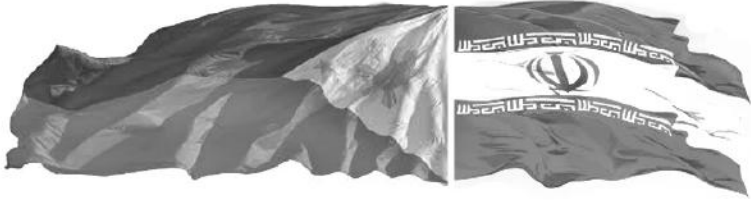
PHILIPPINE-IRAN RELATIONS

50 Years and Beyond

50 Years and Beyond

edited by HENELITO A. SEVILLA, JR., Ph.D.

Philippine-Iran Relations



50 Years and Beyond



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junior_sevilla@yahoo.com, Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines, 1101.

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FOREWORD

The impression of two great nations, Iran and the Philippines, toward each other is clear, amicable and friendly. Centuries ago, Persian navigators paved their way through thousands of kilometers toward East Asia and reached this land, establishing linkages between the peoples and cultures of both countries. This continued up to the contemporary era, with the last 50 years binding it officially with bilateral relations.

Their shared experiences in withstanding colonization in their quest for independence and freedom have generated common cultural traits that are adhered to and appreciated by the peoples of both nations. In 2015, accounts over the 50 years of diplomatic relations were presented to the scientific and official establishments in celebration of this amicable bond.

The International Conference on Philippine-Iran Relations: 50 Years and Beyond was the outcome of a joint effort by the Iranian Embassy and the Cultural Section of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Manila, in cooperation with the University of the Philippines-Diliman and scholars who shared their scientific and practical experiences with the ultimate objective of enhancing the relations between the two nations.

Scholars, elites, experts and thinkers who presented their methodical essays and lectures added to the scientific enrichment of the gathering. The academic session that was held is a good example for scholarly gatherings in the future and a valuable stimulus for activists who are engaged in political, cultural and economic endeavors.

Foreword

The event, definitely, owed its occurrence to its organizer, the late Cultural Counselor Dr. Kiyomars Amiri (peace be on his departed soul). The few months of Dr. Amiri's tour of duty in the Philippines saw his various efforts and endowment in different fields. Sad to say, the inevitable came and we are left with our mind full of his recollections. We plead to God Almighty to bless the soul of that Man of Culture.

This compilation is the summation of the conference's articles and scientific works. It is presented with the hope that those who are interested in enhancing the mutual relations between the two nations may find some benefit in it.

Finally, I would like to render my best thanks and appreciation to those who gave their ultimate efforts to bring the event into a success, particularly His Excellency Ali Asghar Mohammadi, former Ambassador of I.R. of Iran to the Philippines, Dr. Henelito Sevilla, Jr., Assistant Dean of the Asian Center in U.P. Diliman and Coordinator of its West Asia Studies Program, and other respectful colleagues of mine.

Mohammad Jafarimalek

Cultural Counselor

Cultural Section, I. R. of Iran Embassy - Manila

PREFACE

This book, “Philippine - Iran Relations: Fifty Years and Beyond”, is perhaps one of the best books that have been written on bilateral relations between Iran and the Philippines since it has covered the views and opinions of a group of informed and experienced scholars and experts.

In the last half century, there were a number of similarities in the historic course of developments between Iran and the Philippines. However, I believe the closest one is the human factor. The biggest and perhaps the most important asset of both countries is their people who played scientific and economic roles beyond their geographical national boundaries and is worthy of respect and reverence by the international community.

The developments in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East region, and the formation of new political and economic trends in the geographical sphere of East Asia, have created conditions that make it incumbent upon Iran and the Philippines to review and take into consideration their traditional relations. Should the bilateral ties be reconsidered, the Iranian people have to look into their relations with the Philippines in a futuristic and deeper way while the Filipino people further require a more independent and coherent approach in their connections with Iran.

Preface

It seems there are so many things that the two nations can learn from each other and a lot of new opportunities that both countries can provide for their economic growth and prosperity. But despite all these, the two nations' knowledge and understanding of each other is limited and that is the biggest obstacle to developing closer cooperation and deeper communications. I think the most urgent task facing the intellectuals, elite and educated people of the two countries is sustaining the contemporary relations with the objective of further strengthening and deepening this.

Filipinos and Iranians are in need of a consistent and continuous effort to find out about each others real capacity and capabilities, and pave the way for a more beneficial future for both nations through mutual decision and determination.

H. E. Mohammad Tanhaei
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Islamic Republic of Iran

INTRODUCTION

by Asian Center Dean

Iran is an interesting country with diverse culture. The richness of its experience rests on its people, resources and traditions. It is unfortunate to say the least, that these characteristics, despite technological revolution and regional connectivity are still cloaked with misconceptions. Thus, the publication of this proceeding, is a relief as well as a reward to all contributors and organizers who had painstakingly pushed its realization to promote wider knowledge and understanding of the rich culture and achievements of this early civilization.

The University of the Philippines' Asian Center (AC), as one of the organizers, is also happy to see the realization of this proceeding. Being the only graduate degree-granting institution in the University with regional focus, it is our mandate to promote the study of "Asia in the Philippines and the Philippines in Asia". Hence, the publication of the following papers on Iran, some written by the AC's faculty, is a fulfilment of our mandate to contribute in some ways in the understanding of the bilateral relations between the Philippines and Iran after five decades of diplomatic ties. May the readers find this resource material informative and useful to encourage continuing interactions and solicit further collaboration with scholars, students, bureaucrats, diplomats and other decision makers in Asia as we start the next 50 years of Philippine-Iran relations.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay po tayong lahat!

Joefer B. Santarita, Ph.D.

Dean

EDITOR'S NOTE

PHILIPPINE-IRAN RELATIONS: Fifty Years and Beyond speaks about the bilateral relations between the two countries from a multifaceted approach. It seeks to problematize the overall framework of the relationship in 50 years, while trying to find answers on what direction the Philippines and Iran shall follow in the coming years. It can be argued that for the past five decades, various factors emanating from domestic environment of the two states defined the nature of their relations; however, it cannot be denied also that factors external to the states had significantly influenced state projection, perception, reaction and level of cooperation for the past 50 years. Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979 and the subsequent establishment of the Islamic Republic in that country received mixed reactions from the Filipino people. Iran used to be one of the destination countries in the Middle East region by Overseas Filipino Workers prior to the 1979 revolution. The decades following revolution witnessed the decreasing number of Filipinos in that country. While the two countries maintain cordial diplomatic relations, this did not, however, transform into a substantial increase in trade volume, active tourism cooperation, and dynamic political, cultural and scientific exchanges between the two countries. External elements such as the US factor and the international media portrayal (like the BBC and CNN) on Iran greatly influence and shape perception and expectations in these two countries.

This volume comprises nine articles with different area focus in the bilateral relations of Philippines and Iran. Sevilla's article argues that Iran and the Philippines have not adequately taken advantage of the potentials they could have offered to one another. In spite of official awareness of these potentials, the volume of bilateral transactions (political, economic and cultural) remained at the modest level. Dumia's article traces the historical and contemporary evolution of Philippine-Iran relations. Like Sevilla, Dumia asks about barriers that hindered Philippine-Iran trade, investment and economic promotion. Diampuan's article talks about theoretical frameworks that may be utilized in analyzing Islamic revolution in 1979 in Iran and the People Power Revolution in the Philippines in 1986. Using different theoretical tools, Diampuan tries to examine factors that may explain the precipitation of critical mass protest in Iran and the

Philippines. At the same time, Javier analyzes the reality behind why people in the two countries wanted change and to determine whether goals were achieved in these two revolutions.

Suelto's piece talks about the perception on Iran and Iranians in the Philippines. Suelto shows how representation on Iran and Iranians either in television, radio or paper publications affects Filipino imaging on the people and country. Such is very important in understanding the level of cooperation among two nations. Heydarian's work looks at the similarities in the collective struggle of the two nations. Santarita's article talks about the intra-Asia cultural studies which may encourage students in the graduate schools to look into the historical, sociological and anthropological examination of national and transnational processes within Asia in which the Philippines and Iran are very much part of. Talampas' work examines voting behavior of Iran and the Philippines in the international organization such as the United Nations, particularly in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) from 1940 to 1980s. Lastly, Tajar approaches the Philippine-Iran relations through linguistics, citing common Filipino words with Persian origin.

It is our hope that this publication will help us understand the dynamics of Philippine-Iran bilateral relations and eventually encourage academics, practitioners and concerned individuals to engage in more productive research activities to help strengthen the ties between our two countries.

Henelito A. Sevilla, Jr.
Project Proponent

50 Years and Counting

Speech delivered by the former Iranian Ambassador at the International
Conference on Philippine-Iran Relations: 50 Years and Beyond

*In the Name of God,
The Beneficent, The Merciful*

Ladies and Gentleman,

We are here to commemorate the event of the 50th anniversary of the diplomatic relations of two countries at the very prestigious University of the Philippines. Universities in the Philippines are very symbolic as they represent the oldest form of our people to people engagements in the past four decades. Our students studied and graduated here, and some of them are now among very successful entrepreneurs and even high officials in the government. So I thank Asian Center of the University of the Philippines for organizing this event with the assistance of my hard working colleagues at the Cultural Section of the Embassy.

On the 22nd of January 1964, Iran and the Philippines officially established their diplomatic relations. Being founding members of the UN and having similar alignment in the Cold War era, the geopolitical factor has been a main factor in the close friendship between the two governments at that time.

The economic factor based on energy requirements of the Philippines alongside Iran's being the first destination of overseas Filipino workers in the Middle East brought the two nations' relationship even closer.

However, in the late 60's and 70's, during the early years after the establishment of diplomatic relations, the first batch of Iranian students chose this country for their higher education and established the strong and solid base for relationship between these two nations in the years to come.

In time and with major developments in these countries, the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 and (EDSA) People Power Revolution in 1986, ties

between the two nations got a new momentum and, as Mr. Heydarian branded, a common desire for popular sovereignty and national self-determination emerged in these two countries, which later proved to be a positive factor in mutual relations.

After a short break, due to major developments in the two countries, diplomatic ties resumed in a new environment with high hopes between two young reborn democracies in East and West Asia. The two states decided to promote their relationship to the ambassadorial level and the Cultural Center of the Iranian Embassy opened in 1990.

In a quick review, the 1990's brought substantial developments in the relationship of the two countries. At the Government level both executive and legislative branches of the two states exhausted their ultimate effort to improve their relationship with a good grasp of global trends, that through friendly relations they were able to serve their mutual interests at the bilateral and regional level. In fact, the global and comprehensive vision of the leadership of the two countries, with the aim of diversification of their foreign relations, helped them to succeed in their endeavors to achieve fruitful results in the overall aspects of the ties and their efforts for promoting through active diplomacy. This was done by supporting each other's initiatives in the bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and working together in world-class initiatives like *Dialogue among Civilizations* and interfaith dialogues. These efforts were well accepted in the world community; and with the current situation in international relations, they deserve to be revived for maintaining peace and stability in the globe. The revival of ties after the People Power Revolution in the Philippines began with a fast-paced rapprochement between the two countries. In a span of a decade, reciprocal visits of heads of states, frequent meetings of Speakers of both Parliaments, exchange of delegates in all respected fields resulted to new establishments being set up, many important agreements signed and trade and investment relations flourished.

Cooperation not only increased in bilateral ties but also in very important issues that were essential for mutual ties to be more trustful. In this line, the Islamic Republic of Iran decided to support the peace process in Mindanao and exerted all its influence in the OIC and during the bilateral talks for the 1996 peace agreement between Philippine government and MNLF. Iran also committed to the overall assistance for peace and development in Mindanao under the initiatives of former president Fidel V. Ramos. Iran consistently supported the said policy, and believing in the necessity of peace and security in the southern Philippines and for the sake of eradicating the vicious cycle of violence, it has supported peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the MILF in their long-due peace talks and hopes these efforts and agreements would responsibly move to the next steps.

I am sure our speakers today would highlight different aspects of the very interesting and dynamic relations of the two nations so that I would refrain to go into details any more to give opportunity for you to hear the different views on the topics they would present, but allow me, with lessons from the past and high hopes for future, to present to you some of the features, goals and highlights of our relations:

RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF TIES WITH THE PHILIPPINES

- Philippines is one of the founding members of the ASEAN and is an old partner in the region.
- An important dialogue partner on the regional issues in the Middle East and Southeast Asia
- Philippines is a viable trade and investment destination and a progressive and attractive market in energy, manufacturing and service sectors for trade and investment.
- Active member of the UN and most of the international and regional organizations
- A major dialogue partner on the important international discourses, namely interfaith dialogues, and dialogue among civilizations
- A responsible and like-minded country on many international issues

FEATURES AND GOALS

- Geopolitics and political alliances has its own impact on the relationship.
- Inherently, ties of two countries doesn't have any serious challenges while it needs better mechanisms to safeguard mutual ties against external factors.
- Having close collaboration in the international bodies and organizations like UN, NAM, ACD, GROUP OF 77, ESCAP
- Iran has always been a reliable source of energy even in the hard times.
- Iran has consistently supported the peace process in Mindanao, either bilaterally or through OIC.
- Iran is and has been a safe exit route for your citizens during the past crises.
- Having very active people to people engagements in the past decades
- Presence of Iranian student and business community during the past four decades elevated the image of Iran in the mind- set of the Filipinos. Establishing family relationship through marriage of the citizens of the two nations, and now having a very successful half Iranian-Filipino community in two countries
- Iran's investment in petrochemical complex of Bataan despite all challenges has been the symbol of our commitment to our ties.
- Iran is the most important market for banana export of the Philippines in the Middle East.
- Having establishments in our bilateral relationship through institutions including:
 - Joint Economic Commission,
 - Joint Political Consultative Committee between two foreign ministries,
 - Joint Consular Commission, 5th round held in Manila in Jan 2013,
 - Philippines - Iran Business Council in the PCCI.
- At the parliamentary level:
 - Having friendship group between two parliaments,
 - Active relationship through APU, IPU
 - Close contacts and regular visits of Parliamentarians,
 - And consular relations has been actively driven between two governments and despite some issues, it has been one of the main features of the ties in the past three decades.

Necessities of a futuristic relationship and outlines for more considerations for a stable and sustainable relationship:

1. Reassessment of the strategic view on policy matters among related agencies on mutual ties in two countries,
2. Adjusting the relations with the current developments in the region based on independent core mutual interests and long term vision,
3. Establishing solid foundation on bilateral ties against external shocks based on mutual interest, trust and confidence,
4. Consideration for resuming of oil export to the Philippines which has stopped from January 2012, as a negative sign of the commitments of the two nations for fulfilling of energy security concept despite opposite behavior of Iran in the past to supply energy in the hard times,
5. Reviewing trade barriers among the two nations (banking, shipping, insurance...) which has affected trade ties and lowering down the trade performance,
6. Necessity of active participation of private sectors of two countries in the bilateral ties,
7. Facilitation of more people to people engagements as a main driving force in the cultural ties including:
 - More collaborations in film industry through participation in international festivals of two countries,
 - Holding cultural events (music performance, painting, modern arts, cultural exhibitions, food cuisine, exchange of scholars)
 - Establishment of active and meaningful cooperation between universities of the two countries, especially activating of the signed MOU between UP and Tehran University,
 - Establishing collaboration in new sciences and technologies between two sides,
 - Implementing of the MOU on the sport cooperation signed in 2014 in Tehran,
 - Exchange of academia on major political, legal and international issues,

- Media cooperation through government networks and private ones,
- Requirements on visa facilities for the enhancements of the trade and tourism between two countries

History is built based on our views and performances and we are the ones that can change the course of events for a better future; a different future for our children and the next generation.

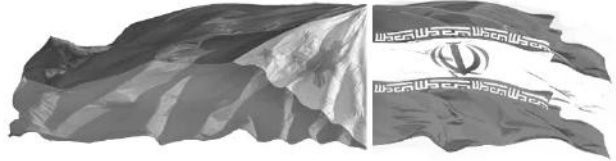
Soon and not too far, the next generations will celebrate a century of the relationship between the two great nations and I do hope that they will remember us, as the people who cared and shared in this very important endeavor. I borrow the concept of caring, sharing and daring from former President Fidel Ramos for our mission.

So I wish your success on not only sharing your views on the very important topic of the relationship of the two nations but also your contribution and thoughts in the future events and opportunities to serve the interest of mutual ties.

Thank you.

Mabuhay!

H. E. Aliasghar Mohammadi
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Islamic Republic of Iran*



WHICH WAY TO GO?

Analyzing the Political, Economic, Cultural Directions of Philippine-Iran Relations

Henelito A. Sevilla, Jr., PhD

Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman

ABSTRACT

Prior to the conception of an independent Philippine state from the hands of Western colonizers such as Spaniards and Americans, a number of available sources written by Filipino historians and scholars suggest that Persian, Arab and Indian traders had already established contacts with the early communities in the country. These contacts were part of the maritime networks in the Southeast Asian region. Trade and political connections that flourished among them precipitated the formation of *cultural fusion* as inter-marriages between the locals and Persian traders took place. The cultural fusion was strengthened when the local inhabitants institutionalized Islam, a religion of the Persians and Arabs, through the adoption and practice of Islamic teachings.

Moving forward, the official bilateral diplomatic relations between Iran and the Philippines since 1964 can be said to be modest in their form and substance. Judging from fifty years of bilateral relations, the Philippines and Iran have not adequately taken advantage of the potentials they could have offered one another. Despite an official awareness and recognition of these potentials, the level of bilateral transactions (trade, political and cultural) remained at a minimal level. This paper is aimed at analyzing which direction should the Philippine and Iran bring their relationship. In doing this, a few questions could be asked: Why there was no significant improvement of the relationship in the past decades? What opportunities can these two countries offer one another? What are the options for the Philippines and Iran?

KEYWORDS: Philippine-Iran relations, diplomatic relations, Islamic government, external interference, Filipino-Iranian communities, potential resources

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS

Formal relations between nations and countries in the global community evolved over years of unofficial and or official interactions between and among themselves. For even prior to the formal introduction of the Westphalian system of nation-state, peoples from different parts of the world were freely moving from one part of the globe to another in search of self-satisfaction, national glorification, increase imperial might or power or simply to look for an opportunity to trade and improve economic status in the society where they belonged.

The "wandering" merchants coming from different backgrounds were perhaps the most important group of people who created an opportunistic connection between their nation, country or state of origin with other nations, countries or states in the globe. Such movements of people paved a way to a close collaboration between them to achieve what they perceived to be common or mutually beneficial interests. They do not only interact, integrate or assimilate in communities where they find good for their business, but also intermarried with locals and settled down in those areas.

The story of wandering merchants mentioned above validates the story of early Persians, Arabs and Indians who arrived in the islands now known as the Philippines, in the early centuries. These merchants arrived in the country through the maritime silk route, which connected West Asia (Middle East), Southeast Asia, and China to the Pacific islands. The centrality of Southeast Asia to the maritime movement of tradable goods including piracy and slavery had made the Philippine islands one of the few important maritime terminal hubs in Southeast Asia and the world.

These trade interactions became more intense as China gradually opened its doors to Western trade, which eventually made Sulu archipelago a "pivotal position in global commerce evermore powerful, both as a regional center of trade and in relations to dominion of surrounding areas-especially the neighbouring territories and populations of the Sultanates of Maguindanao and Brunei."¹ Chinese accounts tell us that as "early 300 AD, long before the advent of Islam, the Arabs (possibly with Persians) had a counting house in Canton (which they later on called "Khanfu") where they met for business transactions and which also served as a warehouse for their merchandise.

Thus, it can be said in general that from the 4th century to the 7th century, the sea trade between Egypt, Persia and India on one hand, and that of India to Southeast Asia and East Asia on the other hand, were progressively under Arab control"² and possibly Persian too. The *tarsilas*³ of Sulu could perhaps adequately explain the connections of Muslim Filipinos to those of Arab and Persian merchants who arrived in the country at the early centuries.

The intermarriages between the Persians, Arabs and the local people of Sulu archipelago created good chances for the adoption of Islam as the religion in the area, and hybrid fusion of Middle Eastern and early Filipino values, culture and way of life. As William Gervase Clarence-Smith, a scholar from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, mentioned, "Middle Easterners [Persian and Arabs alike] have made a significant contribution to the history of the Philippines and yet scholars have ignored them."⁴ This group of peoples significantly made historical landmarks on the Philippines economy, culture and politics. They "marry into the host society, so that levels of assimilation were quite substantial" although for the purpose of personal guard or security, they "retained a high degree of geographical mobility, able and willing to leave the country whenever politicians or social movements made them feel unwelcome."⁵

Spain's colonization of the Philippines introduced a new system of governance in which pre-Spanish values, literatures and cultural traits were gradually threatened with the forcible introduction of the Spanish way of life to the islands. Writings about the Philippine islands by Spanish missionaries and personalities overshadowed documents written in pre-Spanish time. They were burned or kept away from people in isolated places so that the colonizers could successfully replace them with their own narratives and storytelling regarding Spain. This marginalization of pre-Spanish narratives, literatures and treaties, therefore, significantly isolated the Filipino practices, rituals and traditions, which explain our connections with the Persians, Arabs and peoples of the Southeast Asia.

IRAN-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS, 1964 TO 1979

The official bilateral transaction between Iran and the Philippines commenced on January 22, 1964⁶ when both countries recognized the need to formally

open diplomatic missions. However, it was only on August 16, 1974 that Iran opened an embassy in Manila and the Philippines opened an embassy in Tehran. The move to formalize relations between these countries was long overdue given that relations among them began in ancient times as illustrated above. Moreover, there were three other factors that affected this opening.

The first factor is based on the economic realities in Iran at that time. The massive accumulation of petrodollars as the result of oil price volatility in the 1973 oil crisis brought about by the Arab-Israeli wars, transformed Iran's economic life into above standard, which eventually created a rapid increase in social and material expectations of the Iranian people from the Shah's imperial government. In line with this, the imperial government increased the number of foreign workers to work in oil fields, hospitals, airports, schools and other service sectors. Having experienced unemployment problems in the Philippines, President Marcos' administration was left with one option and that was to take advantage of the economic realities in Iran at the time through the "temporary sending" of Filipino workers.

The second factor is connected to the first one, which was the move of the Marcos government to open Philippine diplomatic doors to Islamic and Communist countries in the Middle East and North Africa as well as Eastern European countries. The pragmatic yet calculated move of the Marcos administration to navigate the Philippines' diplomatic boat to these regions, gave him merit as one of the most successful foreign policy architects in the history of the country. By opening to the MENA region, Marcos, as Benjamin Domingo would note, "was able to contain the three problems of his time: a looming energy crisis since the Middle East was the leading source of oil even as he called the Arab and Muslims states to help him solve the growing problem of Islamic insurgency and separatism in the south; and the creation of job opportunities for the overseas Filipinos in the Middle East."⁷

The third reason that explained the opening of diplomatic ties is the "US factor." The Philippines and Iran may not be the same in terms of economic weight but both had served as important allies of the United States in two geostrategic maritime lanes, which connect the Persian Gulf to Asia and the Pacific. The potential threats to US interests brought about by Communist Soviet Union required reliable partners in those areas to make sure that these threats can be easily deterred through military alliances and actions with Iran and the Philippines. The importance of Iran and the Philippines in US geostrategic calculations during the Cold War lies in the fact that these two countries are located in the most

crucial points of the international maritime route. In addition to this, the US firmly believed that without Iran and the Philippines as allies, surrounding countries could be easily influenced by Soviet Union. Hence the famous 'domino effect' would eventually determine the security structure of the region and thus throwing America and its allies' interests into a critical and unacceptable situation.

However, the event of 1979 in Iran changed the political calculation of the United States for the Philippines and Iran. Iran's Islamic government chose to disdain American imperialism in addition to its move to repatriate foreign workers in the country especially in the Iranian oil sector. This new policy had affected thousands of overseas Filipinos including other foreign workers. Iran and the United States broke diplomatic relations after university students stormed the American Embassy in Tehran and hostaged its diplomatic staff in 1979. The American compound was famously called the "espionage den" by Iranians.⁸ Many Iranians who supported the Islamic regime believed that Americans who lived and worked in Iran at the time prior to the 1979 revolution contributed to the national economic and political deterioration of that country. In addition, many Iranians have also attributed security failure to the US interference in the country to support the monarchical interests over public interests. The Islamic revolution was interpreted by many local people and outsiders alike as the triumph of good interests over evil interests.

In addition to the massive repatriation of Filipino workers out of Iran, the advent of the Islamic Revolution had some implications for the Philippines. It can be observed in the political spectrum in the country that the Marcos administration was also experiencing domestic challenges from the Communist north and the Muslim secessionists in southern Philippines. The tough handling of security management by military and police personnel during the Martial Law period had created many enemies. Although at first the Catholic Church tried not to get involved in the political games in the country, the EDSA revolution of the 1986 evidenced the leading role of the Church to disperse Marcos armies and enabled peaceful protest against the Marcos government to continue. The important role of the Church in the 1986 revolution can be compared to the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran in which Islamic clerics were at the forefront of the uprising. Both initiated a peaceful but people-centered revolution. And both revolutions were in a position towards removing authoritarianism and American political influences in the country.

"President Marcos was branded as the American Shah of the Philippines."⁹

The second implication revolved around the movement of the Iranian students in the Philippines at the time of the revolution. Since 1960, young Iranian students were enrolling in Philippine universities and colleges as they were attracted to a relatively low cost of education and the use of English as the medium of instruction. In 1979, there were about 2,500 Iranian students in the country, and in February 12, 1979, around "700 of them broke into the Iranian Embassy in Manila, cheered the victory of the revolution, tore down all the Shah's picture and replaced them with pictures of Ayatollah Khomeini as the ambassador and his staff looked helplessly."¹⁰ This was followed by a demonstration near a "Manila mosque against President Carter and Israeli Prime Minister Begin for the ceaseless Israeli raids on Lebanon,"¹¹ and in the second week of November, more than 200 Iranian students demonstrated in front of their embassy with anti-American slogans.¹² These series of events precipitated the decision to ban all demonstrations by foreigners in the country.¹³

The third implication of the Islamic revolution to the Philippines was the change of the government from monarchy to an Islamic Republic which eventually had assured its support to the Moro National Liberation Front campaign in the Islamic world headed by its chair, Nur Misuari. Iran vowed not to give the Philippines any single drop of oil until "oppression and massacre of Muslims" stopped. Nur Misuari used a two-pronged campaign to the Islamic world. One was directed towards individual countries such as Iran and the second was directed towards international Muslim organizations such as the OIC.¹⁴ It can be noted that since the 1980s, Iran-Philippines relations had not been like what it used to be prior to the Islamic Revolution. Although there have been many attempts to go back to their pre-1979 Islamic Revolution, they were not, however, substantiated with actions. Many agreements previously signed between the two pre-revolutionary governments were not evenly and substantially acted upon except perhaps in the field of education where Iranians continued to come and study in the Philippines. In spite the signing of new agreements in energy, environment, fisheries, maritime matters, trade and investment, etc. since the early of 1990s, only few substantial gains have been recorded. Below are the agreements signed between Iran and the Philippines.

Philippine-Iran Bilateral Agreements, 1990-2000

Air Services	Memorandum of Understanding between the Aeronautical Authorities of the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran on Air Services. August 5, 2008.
Agriculture	Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Agriculture Science and Technology and Promotion of Agricultural Trade. Signed in January 16, 1996. Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in the fields of Agricultural Science and technology and Promotion of Agricultural Trade between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran. January 16, 1994.
Culture	Cultural Agreement between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran. March 11, 1995.
Economic, Technical and Cultural Cooperation	Memorandum of Understanding for Economic, Technical and Cultural Cooperation between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran. December 21, 1990.
Energy	Memorandum of Understanding on Areas of Cooperation between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of Energy. October 8, 1995.
Environment	Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran for Cooperation in Environment. October 8, 1995.
Fisheries	Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran on Technical Fisheries Cooperation. October 8, 1995.
General Relations	Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Consultative Committee on Political, Economic and Cultural Cooperation between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran. May 8, 2000.
Investment	Agreement on Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran. October 8, 1995.
Maritime Matters	Agreement on Maritime Merchant Shipping between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran. October 8, 1995
Trade	Trade Agreement between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran. March 11, 1995.

Source: Philippine Treaties Index, 1946-2010. Foreign Service Institute, Manila, Philippines. 2010.

The next part will examine the untapped potentials in their relations and why there is a need to mobilize them.

UNTAPPED POTENTIALS

Iran and the Philippines, as two countries located in maritime strategic routes of the world, have a lot of potentials to offer one another. The reality to these potentialities remained underdeveloped until this time. Many ask why in spite of the recognition on both sides that they could offer so much to one another, the bilateral relations remained insignificant in terms of trade, political, cultural, and security engagements until today. The common maritime strategic assets of the two countries for many decades now have not been given much attention as to what extent they could be utilized.

A. Maritime strategic assets. Over the past decades and even in the olden times, the Persian Gulf, the Hormoz Strait and the Southeast Asian maritime routes have played as conduits to the movement of international trade and people from one corner of the globe to another. Given this conditionality, a collaborative and mutually recognized effort between the two governments of Iran and the Philippines, to provide security and a free passage of vessels and tradeable goods such as crude oil, is not just good and desirable but a necessity to both countries and the whole world. As former president Fidel V. Ramos said during his June 1992 inaugural speech, "...[O]ur archipelago is strategically located in the critical sea-lanes of Asia and the Pacific," and that this geopolitical fact shapes our relations with the world [including Iran]-a sense of responsibility for building of peace and stability in our region, and a recognition of opportunity in our quest for development."¹⁵

Of course, this condition must be viewed within the lens of regional and global interdependence and interconnectivity of maritime interests. India, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and other countries, which lie along this strategic routes, should vigorously cooperate with one another. Given this scenario, it is easy to assume that the maritime security cooperation between the two countries may contribute to regional and global maritime stability and peace.

Given that the Philippines is one of the world's biggest producers of seafarers, the security of the vessels passing through these routes and the well-being of Filipino seafarers is a vital interests for the country. In recognition to the need to safeguard the welfare of our seafarers, Philippines and Iran signed a memorandum of agreement following a June 2010 meeting of the Diplomatic

Conference of Parties to the International Convention on Standards and Training, Certification and Watchkeeping.¹⁶ This is in addition to the Agreement on Maritime Merchant Shipping between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran that was signed on October 8, 1995.¹⁷

Apart from the issue on the security and protection of Filipinos seafarers, Iran and the Philippines, both located at the crucial juncture of two maritime routes, can boost close cooperation in stopping organized international criminal groups such as drug and human traffic syndicates. Iran and the Philippines are undoubtedly concerned about these issues and therefore a close collaboration between them together with members of the international community may not only discourage these criminals to do illegal activities but also help strengthen relations between them.

B. Crude oil supply is another crucial factor for the Philippines to figure out in revitalizing its relations with Iran. Although the Philippine market is not big as compared to other giant oil consuming countries in the region, the demand for crude oil by consuming markets like the Philippines, may it be small or big, is important to the well-being of the Iranian economy. One may note that Iran is not just blessed with oil and gas resources, it specifically ranked in the world's top three oil and gas producing countries, next only to Saudi Arabia and Russia. Iran is also an important producer of minerals, gold, fishery and agricultural products. A more independent-driven approach adopted either by the Philippines and Iran, and which is far from the dictates of global power, can bring economic gains to these countries.

C. Tourism and historic-cultural bases are other areas in which the two countries can surely offer to one another. Iran or Persia is a country with great historical and tourism-based industry given its centuries of civilizational existence. It holds a strong cultural and scientific record of achievements - achievements that are manifested in its rich artefacts being collected and its ongoing explorative archaeological activities in various parts of the country. Likewise, the Philippines, although a new country with little more than one hundred years of independence, can also offer incomparable products taken from its rich and vibrant cultural and civilization achievements. This can be

seen in its historical and touristic sites, rich archaeological discoveries and dynamic and hospitable Filipino people. Apart from this, the country's beautiful beaches and natural landscapes are also important areas in which Iranian tourists, businessmen and students alike can enjoy. Iranians can surely enjoy the beauty, history, cultural heritage and warmed hospitality of the Filipino people, while on the other hand, Filipinos can learn more about Iran, including its culture and people. Mr Senga, the former Philippine Ambassador to Iran claimed, the increase in tourism activities between these two countries would "lead other sectors in society including food, energy and construction industries"¹⁸ to increase too.

In a recent JACM event, DFA Undersecretary Rafael Siguis and Iranian Deputy Minister Fatholahi signed the Executive Program of the Tourism Cooperation Memorandum between the Department of Tourism of the Philippines and Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization for 2011-2014.

The agreement aims to expand and strengthen tourism cooperation between the Philippines and Iran through: (1) exchange of information, other promotional materials and statistical on tourism; (2) cooperation on tourism-related programs; (3) exchange of information and documentation in the fields of hotel and professional training of personnel employed in the tourism sector; (4) introduction and establishment of connections between training institutes and centers of both countries in the fields of hotel, hospitality and tourism, and; (5) encouragement of both country's private sector to cooperate on tourism programs of common interest, such as organizing tourism exhibitions and technical seminars.¹⁹

D. Agricultural, industrial and fisheries potentials. Given the country's comparative advantage, agricultural and fishery industries are another sectors in which the two countries can explore and collaborate. We cannot remain satisfied from seeing only Philippine bananas, pineapples and coconuts in Iranian markets, while our neighboring countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand are actively engaging with the Iranian businessmen to promoting their local agricultural and fishery products in the Iranian markets.

Iran too has a lot of products to offer especially in the petrochemical, industrial, agricultural and fishery sectors. Dried fruits and pistachios can be

desirable in Philippine markets only if Filipino consumers could properly understand their health values. A good marketing strategy should be properly tailored by both Philippine and Iranian officials in order to achieve the best possible outcome in their trade transactions. Mining, oil and petrochemical refineries, and cement factories are other industries worth developing. The operation of regular passenger and goods transport lines can make all these easier for both countries.²⁰

E. Mixed blooded Filipino-Iranians is another crucial untapped potential for Philippines and Iran. The presence of a good number of hybrid Filipino-Iranians in the Philippines and in Iran including those that are enrolled in various universities in the Philippines are simply extraordinary that cannot be ignored if one would talk on how to strengthen bilateral relations and further cultural understanding. In spite of their active participation in many socio-civic, cultural and charitable activities in Iran and in the Philippines, they remained untapped by both governments. It must be noted that diplomatic success in bilateral relations between two countries lies not solely on the policies and agreements being signed and ratified by their representatives rather, it depends much on the dynamic of people-to-people interactions. Filipinos could learn from Iranians and Iranians could learn from the Filipinos, yet the formation of another identity in the form of cultural fusion between Iranians and Filipinos, or mixed blooded Filipino-Iranians is without doubt more advantageous than the former. Mixed blooded Filipino-Iranians embodied in themselves the hybridity of two cultural traits and values, and therefore, they can be considered as vital instruments in the promotion of the two countries' relations. It is only a question on how and when the two countries will take advantage of the potentials they can offer. There are two dynamic Filipino communities in Iran, namely the *Filipino-Irano Community Association* and the *Pinay-Irano Family Community*, while there are also two existing Filipino-Iranian groups in the Philippines called the *Global-Half*

Filipino-Iranian Association. In addition, other organization such as the *Philippine-Iran Cultural and Scientific Society, Inc.* based in Manila and is registered in the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) is also actively involved in the information dissemination about the two countries through academic seminars, and symposia apart from its humanitarian and cultural activities in various depressed areas in Metro Manila.

Hossien Karimi currently heads the Global Half Filipino-Iranian Association and there are around 300 members but the group expects to reach more than 1000 members by the end of this year.²¹ It is however important to note that a "mere position of talents [such as these] is not a guarantee for a collective success of a nation."²² It will require a systematic recognition and organization of efficient skills and talents to match up with the immediate needs for both countries. If we remain complacent with our previous actions and policies without recognizing these potentials, we would not be able to maximize our strategic move to promote better and productive Philippine-Iran cooperation in the future.

F. Lastly, Philippines and Iran can expand **academic, sports, media and scientific collaborations** without prejudicing the national interests of either country. Iran's cultural, athletic, academic and research communities have acquired a positive reputation in the world as they achieved scientific breakthroughs in various fields. Young Iranian scientists and sports enthusiasts have not only brought glory to their country but also contributed significantly to world peace, education and scientific development. On the other hand, Filipinos share the same experiences with their Iranian counterparts. As Filipinos actively participate in the promotion of global understanding and development, they become more productive on their own and adaptable when dealing with other nations of the world. The presence of thousands of Iranian students in Philippine universities since the late 1960s to the present time, and the presence of hundreds of Filipinos with Iranian families residing in Iran today, are indicative of open and hospitable gestures they have accorded to one another. In the recent survey conducted by the Bureau of Immigration of the Philippines, Iranians are among the top four foreign students enrolled in Philippine universities, which include South Koreans, Indians and Chinese.²³

FACTORS AFFECTING A LOW LEVEL OF BILATERAL INTERACTIONS

Over the years, the Philippines and Iran have entered into no less than 32 agreements, and exchanged high-level visits that were spearheaded by both government officials.²⁴ In spite of the number of potential areas for growth mentioned above, the level of actual bilateral interactions between the two countries as manifested in the volume and diversity of actual trade and commerce remain limited.

What factors explain this limitation in their relationship? What direction should the two countries pursue in the future?

In answering the first question, there are at least five factors that are worth mentioning: the *American factor*; the *media factor*; *marginalization of available reading resources in textbooks used in the Philippine schools and universities*; and finally the *limitation of knowledge regarding Iran and the Philippines*. Each them can be treated separately or collectively as one may be connected or supplementing with another in some respect.

A. The American factor

Prior to the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution, the United States figured as the most important common ally of Imperial Iran and the Republic of the Philippines. Together with Greece, and Turkey, Iran and the Philippines were designated as important strategic point guards of the United States to safeguard democracy and protect the strategic vital sea lanes from the Mediterranean, Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. However, the 1979 revolution in Iran changed the Iranian political landscape and strategic priorities into something that was not in line with the grand strategic design of the global powers. Whereas the Philippines has remained an important ally to the United States until today, Iran, on the other hand, chose to cut diplomatic relations with the United States and vowed to prevent American imperialist intervention inside Iran and the Middle East region.

This condition allows many scholars in political science and international relations to believe that the American factor is one, if not

the most, important deciding factor for both Iran and the Philippines to limit their interactions. Walden Bello and Javad Heydarian argue that in the past the Philippines' "foreign policy has been overly submissive to the United States interests and often failed to promote the country's own interests."²⁵ Such arguments continue to reverberate until today. The sustained strategic alliances between the United States and the Philippines can also be explained in terms of what David Wurfel coined as "the Americanization of Filipino elite values and attitude," which suggest the "sharing of American perceptions of external environment."²⁶ Although Islamic Iran is not an enemy to the Philippines, and the Philippines is not an enemy of any country, "the Philippines has always align itself with countries that espouse [the same values such] democracy and freedom."²⁷ Given this situation, it may be safe to assume that we give low level of prioritization to the region including Iran in our foreign policy initiatives. With the exception of OFWs concern, OIC involvement in Mindanao, and oil supply, other areas are not fully explored.

B. Media factor

Mainstream and social media are considered to be the most penetrating instruments used in cultural or public diplomacy. The decisive role of media in creating public opinion and perception is unquestionable. The subject being presented on television screens by newsmen may become an accepted reality for most ordinary Filipinos and Iranians whose analyses mainly depend on media outlets.

Without thorough research and validation of the news presented, the public may develop opinions and perceptions vis-à-vis other countries or groups of people. In Iran, media reporting focuses more on national and regional development and American regional imperialism but not much about the development and dynamism of the Southeast Asian countries particularly the Philippines. Many Iranians have limited knowledge about the region and the Philippines. In the Philippine setting, Middle East region is always presented by the media as the area of rivalry and conflict, area of Islamic jihadist and terrorist

activities and the area where millions of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) work and earn desperately. This kind of media portrayal of the region including Iran would made many of us believe that the region is dangerous and their people cannot be trusted. If such trend will continue then we would continue to expect a one-sided opinion and bias perception about the region - something that is not beneficial to either country.

C. Marginalization of area studies

The marginalization of narratives and literatures about the region in both academic and public domains would suggest the poverty of our understanding and knowledge regarding the region including Iran. Without doubt, Iran and the Middle East region have a lot of things to offer to the Philippines, yet, there are limited academic think-tanks in the country that tackle about these issues seriously. Although there are various Islamic institutions in the country, they are also limited to the study of Islam and not much on the specialized issues such as security, political, economic, cultural and scientific domains. Even at the Asian Center, University of the Philippines, the West Asian (Middle East) Studies program for MA was only re-opened in the second half of 2008. This condition suggests that there is an urgent need to develop a pool of Filipino experts in order to help in and better inform the public about the dynamism of Iran and the Middle East region and not just depend solely on the Western reports being provided on us.

D. Limitation of knowledge regarding Iran and the Philippines

Our limited knowledge regarding Iran and the region as the result of the above mentioned factors might put us in a disadvantage situation. Filipinos, like their Iranians peers, have limited knowledge about the culture, history and values of one another. In a survey I conducted in various universities in the Philippines, Filipino students think that Iranians are Arabs and their cultural traits, values, civilizations are the same. In the same manner, when you ask Iranian students in the Philippines, they think that Filipino students consider them as Arabs and that being Iranians and being Arabs are the same. This little

discrepancy would suggest that we do have limited knowledge about the Iranians and vice versa.

WHICH WAY TO GO?

In the final analysis, let us ask ourselves, where do we want to go from here? Are we satisfied with this modest level of interactions in our bilateral relations? Shall we just not think of how we can re-navigate our boat toward a dynamic and progressive interaction? Or are we moving forward using our limited knowledge to find untapped resources for a brighter future?

I believe that majority of us would want to see more development in our bilateral relations. However, for such wants and wishes to materialize, we need to do some preparations, which cannot be achieved overnight. Such development in our bilateral relations requires more political will, independent policy, honing of pools of experts, continued consultation and dialoguing, and a broadening of perspectives regarding each other. The empowerment of our young generation of Iranians who graduated from or are currently studying in Philippine universities can be the starting point of consideration. Lastly, we should encourage the active participation of intermarried Filipino and Iranian couples and second generation Filipinos- Iranians in the process, for they are the most visible potential that these two countries can utilize at the present.

The so-called "kinship" attribute in our cooperation must be given equal importance. This is because it reflects the close ties between two countries, which resulted in a lot of economic and trade ventures here and in Iran. Kinship is due to thousands of Iranians, who came to the Philippines over the years to study and "further cemented their ties by marrying Filipinos," for this "kinship" begets cooperation and cooperation begets sustainable "trade,"²⁸ and possibly a sustainable future for Philippine-Iran relations.

NOTES

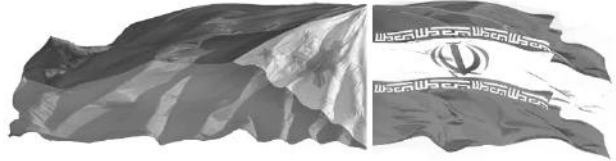
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50 YEARS AND BEYOND: The Genesis, Development, Challenges and Future of Philippines-Iran Relations

Mr. Mariano A. Dumia, MA, MNSA

Former Chief of Mission (CM) and Charge d' Affaires, Philippine Embassy, Tehran

ABSTRACT

Fifty years ago on January 22, 1964, the Republic of the Philippines and the Imperial State of Iran, then emerging as the leading economic and military power in the Middle East under the reign of the secular and pro- West Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi forged diplomatic relations, making Iran the first country in the oil-rich Persian Gulf region to establish relations with the Philippines. Historical accounts, however, show that relations between the Philippines and Iran are rooted in ancient times.

In general, many people worldwide including Filipinos are unfamiliar with the Islamic Republic and Iranians. Except for Iran's renowned carpet and caviar trademarks (for the world's elite) and its portrayal by Western media as a sponsor or haven of "Islamic terrorists," many people have scant if not inaccurate or biased information about Iran and its people. There is need for deeper bilateral cultural understanding and further enhancement of people to people relations through the Filipino-Iranian communities in both countries and the active promotion of cultural diplomacy.

Considering the foregoing geopolitical realities, this paper traces the historical origin, development, cooperation and challenges of Philippine – Iran relations in all aspects: political, economic, consular and socio-cultural.

It also explores and presents socio-cultural commonalities and people to people linkages of Filipinos and Iranians and its role in promoting bilateral relations. It also looks into ways of gaining deeper understanding of the core principles, ideals, values and tenets of *Shi'ism* and the governance of the Islamic Republic. This presentation likewise explores the two countries' economic potentials and capabilities for further mutual development.

In the quest for vibrant and fruitful Philippine-Iran relations in the coming years, the following queries are posed: What are the current "barriers" of Philippine-Iran relations especially in the promotion of trade and investments? How could these obstacles of bilateral relations be addressed? Are there strong foundations of Philippine-Iran relations to overcome the challenges and propel the growth of economic relations? Is there need for a redirection of Philippine foreign policy on the Islamic Republic of Iran based on the principles and ideals of nationalism, national interest, independence and sovereignty? What is the future of Philippine-Iran relations? These are the key issues and questions this paper attempts to explore and provide answers aimed at achieving the national interest from the desired path of mutually beneficial Philippine-Iran relations as the two countries move forward to the next 50 years.

KEY WORDS: Silk Road Trade, Persepolis, Moluccas, Islamic Revolution, Muslim problem, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, *realpolitik*, nuclear power program, nuclear power talks, rapprochement

Half a century ago on January 22, 1964,¹ the Imperial State of Iran, then under the reign of the second and last monarch of the Pahlavi dynasty - the secular and pro-western Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi became the first country in the Middle East's oil-rich Persian Gulf region to forge diplomatic relations with the Republic of the Philippines. Known in the Western world since ancient times until 1935 as Persia, Iran,² after the victory of the Islamic Revolution on February 11, 1979, adopted its official name - the "Islamic Republic of Iran" under the leadership of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.³

Since January 2014, the Philippines and Iran have been organizing various activities to commemorate the two countries' milestone half a century of bilateral relations that have witnessed the development of close friendship and cooperation in the spheres of diplomatic and consular relations as well as trade and socio-cultural linkages that are rooted in antiquity.

GENESIS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

Ancient historians relate that during the reign of the Parthian dynasty in Iran (248 B.C. -226 A.D.) and the Han dynasty in China (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), Arab and Persian (Iranian) merchants became prosperous middlemen in the lucrative Silk Road trade between Chinese traders with their luxurious silk and spices from the Moluccas and merchants from the Roman Empire with their jewels, amber, carpets and glass.⁴ The Silk Road trade continued to flourish in pre-Islamic Iran during the long reign of the Sassanid dynasty (226-651 A.D.) and the Tang dynasty (618 - 907 A.D.) in China.⁵ With the patronage of Iranian and Chinese rulers, the 6,437-kilometer Silk Road that linked Chang'an (Xi'an), China with the Mediterranean coast via Iran's 5th century B.C. Royal Road from Susa in western Iran to Sardis in Asia Minor became the greatest facilitator of ancient East-West commercial and cultural relations. At the crossroad of trade and cultural acculturation, Iran became the earliest melting pot of the world's great civilizations - Chinese, Indian, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Arabian, Greek and Roman.⁶

The impetus of the 7th century rise and expansion of the Islamic faith, governance and culture that swept the centuries-old Zoroastrian Persian trade and cultural dimensions of the Silk Road trade began during the reign of the Baghdad-based Islamic Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258 A.D.) and continued during the reigns of the Mongols (1230-1357) and Timurids (1370-1506) in Iran. From the late 8th to the 14th century, China-bound Arab, Iranian and Indian envoys, traders and Islamic preachers either traversed the Silk Road with their camels and horses or sailed across the extended frontiers of the maritime route to the trading seaports of eastern China via the vast Indian Ocean, Strait of Malacca and the rich "Spice Islands" of the Moluccas.⁷

In the early 12th century, Muslim traders and missionaries dominated the spice trading ports in Sumatra, Java and in the neighboring Moluccas and Sulu archipelago and converted the inhabitants to Islam. Although Arab and Iranian traders initially introduced Islam in Sulu and Mindanao in 1138 A.D., it was in 1380 A.D. that an Arab Muslim missionary named Karim al- Mukdum (renamed Sharif Awliya or Tuan Sharif Aulia) arrived in Sulu from Sumatra and propagated the

Islamic faith among the natives. He also established the Philippines' first mosque in Indangan, Simunol Island.⁸ From Sulu, Muslim traders and missionaries sailed to the islands of Basilan, Mindanao and Luzon and introduced Islam among the people. When the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines in the 16th century, they found thriving Muslim communities in the islands, including Tondo (Manila) ruled by datus, sultans and rajahs - their titles derived from royal Arab, Persian and Indian ruling family ranks.⁹

It is noteworthy that Iranian cultural influences were established along the coast of Malacca and in the Moluccas islands long before the Muslim Arabs conquered the Sassanid Empire in the 7th century. The founder of Malacca, a former ruler of Singapore in the early 1400s named Parameswara was a non- Muslim who changed his name to Iskandar Shah. His son and successor, Sultan Mohammed Shah had to be converted to Islam to marry the daughter of a local Muslim chief.¹⁰ It is significant that the name *Iskandar* is the Persian name of Alexander the Great who conquered Persia in 330 B.C. while *shah* is the Persian word for king - the title of the Iranian imperial monarchs.

It is further significant to note that like the rulers of Malacca, the sultans of Sulu also carried Persian family names like Sultan Salahud-din Bakhtiar and Sultan Ali Shah.¹¹ Filipinos today also carry Iranian family names like Abad, Ali and Mitra.¹² Likewise, there are Filipino words similar to Persian words such as *paa* (leg), *butu* (seed) and *alak/araq* (liquor). Persian words commonly used in trading were likewise assimilated into the Filipino language such as bazaar, sash, tiara, orange, lemon, and melon. The Iranian word *aubor* the suffix *-ao*, which means water is found in names of places in the Philippines located near or along bodies of water such as Mindanao, Lanao, Davao, Surigao, and Tuguegarao.¹³ These Filipino-Iranian words as well as names of people and places attest to the early close trade and socio- cultural relations between Filipinos and Iranians.

ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

After the establishment of diplomatic ties between the Philippines and Iran in 1964, Philippine interests in Iran were handled by the Philippine Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan.¹⁴ Philippine ambassador to Pakistan Romeo S. Busuego served as

the first non-resident ambassador to Iran from 1964 to 1966. Ambassador Juan C. Dionisio, who served from 1966 to 1974, succeeded him. For two decades, officials from the Philippine Embassy in Pakistan regularly travelled to Iran to extend consular services to the thousands of Filipino expatriates.¹⁵ On the other hand, Iranian interests in the Philippines were placed under the jurisdiction of the Iranian Embassy in Tokyo whose ambassadors were accredited as non-resident envoys to the Philippines.

ESTABLISHMENT OF EMBASSIES

With the global oil crisis in the late 60s and early 70s, the emergence of the secessionist Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Southern Philippines and the increasing number of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in the Middle East, the Philippine government deemed it necessary to broaden and strengthen its relations with Islamic countries in the Middle East and Africa by opening more diplomatic missions. Iran, the leading economic and military power in the Middle East outside Israel and host of more than 15,000 Filipino workers, the largest number in the region was slated for the establishment of a Philippine diplomatic mission.

On August 16, 1974, First Secretary and Consul General Juan A. Ona arrived in Tehran from London, opened the Philippine Embassy and served as *Charge d' Affaires* until a year later with the arrival of Lt. Gen. Rafael M. Iletto, the first Philippine resident ambassador to Iran who served for five years until December 1980.¹⁶ With the approval of the Iranian government, the Philippine Embassy, together with the Irish Dominican fathers in Tehran and the Dominican fathers at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, through Father Rogelio Alarcon opened the Angelicum School at the St. Abraham Church compound in Tehran with an all-Filipino faculty and Philippine educational curriculum for the hundreds of Filipino children.¹⁷ The Angelicum in Tehran became the first Philippine educational institution in the Middle East. It also served as a refuge center for Filipinos during the height of the Islamic Revolution.

The Iranian government reciprocated the Philippine government's opening of its embassy in Tehran by opening its embassy in Manila in 1977.¹⁸ To further promote and expand its socio-cultural diplomacy, the Iranian Embassy opened its Cultural Section in 1990. The Philippines and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on tourism cooperation in 2007; an MOU on cultural, scientific and educational cooperation in 2008 and an MOU on cooperation between the National Library of the Philippines and the National Library and Archives of Iran in 2009. Iranian culture, arts, and *Shi'a* Islam were introduced to the public through exhibits, lectures, poetry readings and interfaith dialogues in Philippine colleges and universities.

The Cultural Section of the embassy also conducts *Farsi* language and *Qur'an* classes and invites Filipino poets and authorities on arts and culture to Iran to witness and learn how Iranians preserve and promote their cultural heritage.¹⁹ The Iranian government also established the Al Mustafa International College Foundation in Makati, which offers studies on *Farsi* as well as Iranian history, culture and Shi'ism. Since 2010, the college has been under the guidance of its chancellor, Dr. Seyyed Hashem Mousavi.²⁰ The Iranian government through its embassy also offers scholarships in graduate and post-graduate studies in Iranian state universities. An outstanding beneficiary of Iranian scholarship is Dr. Henelito Sevilla, Jr. who finished his Master's degree in International Relations at Shahid Beheshti University and his Ph.D degree in International Relations at the Tehran University. An expert on Middle East and African affairs, Dr. Sevilla, Jr. is a faculty member at the Asian Center, UP, Diliman.

The Iranian government also invites Filipino diplomats to attend short courses on diplomacy and international relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2010, two young Filipino Foreign Service Officers, Marford Angeles and Rodney Jonas Sumague attended the diplomatic course in Tehran together with other participants from fifteen countries in Asia and Africa.²¹ Like his predecessors, Iran's current ambassador to the Philippines, H.E. Ali Asghar Mohammadi is actively engaged in broadening and strengthening all aspects of mutually beneficial Iran-Philippines relations.

PIONEER FILIPINO WORKERS IN IRAN

With its oil revenues and booming economy in the 60s and 70s, Iran was the leading economy in the Persian Gulf region. Envisioned by the Shah to join the world's top economic and military powers, Iran became the first country in the region to host thousands of American and European expatriates including more than 15,000 professional and highly-skilled Filipino workers in the late 60s²² to work in various infrastructure projects, industries and manufacturing firms mostly owned by American and European companies. Thus, Iran in the mid-60s became the first country destination of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in the Middle East,²³ at least a decade before the systematic mass deployment of thousands of Filipino workers to serve the growing economies of the equally oil-rich Arab states across the Persian Gulf.

The earliest Filipino workers in Iran - doctors, nurses, engineers, technicians, mechanics, and radio operators, mostly from retrenched U.S. companies and military bases in South Vietnam, Laos and Clark and Subic bases in the Philippines - manned government hospitals, airports, seaports, control towers, communication facilities, and aircraft maintenance while others served as U.N. volunteers in various economic and socio-cultural development projects throughout the country.²⁴ These pioneer Filipino workers earned the respect and admiration of the Iranian people for their dedication, efficiency, hard work and fluency in the English language. The Filipino workers' good image in the country fostered goodwill between Filipinos and Iranians. With the comparatively lower cost of education in the Philippines and the use of English as a medium of instruction, many Iranian parents decided to send their children to the Philippines for their college education. The positive image of Filipinos in Iran was further boosted when 19-year old Rafael 'Paeng' Nepomuceno won his first Bowling World Cup Championship in Tehran in 1976. Nepomuceno²⁵ is still fondly remembered and admired by older bowling aficionados in Iran.

In April 2011, the Philippine Embassy in Tehran honored forty-four Filipino expatriates with their Iranian families, who remained in the country during the

first "Reunion of Pioneer Filipino workers in Iran" led by Marieta Retubado-Yousef Morjan who arrived in Iran in October 1970. In September 2012, the embassy again honored the second batch of Filipino workers who arrived in Iran from 1980 to 1985 led by Dr. Marilou Media Hesni. As of 2012, there were 3,640 Filipinos in the Islamic Republic including 952 permanent residents (married to Iranians) and members of their families.²⁶ Iranian husbands of Filipinos proudly express their happiness in being married to their wives whom they describe as *mabait* (kind), responsible, loyal, loving, and caring.²⁷ Iranian husbands say that Filipinos and Iranians have common cultural traits especially their close family ties and being hospitable. Most Filipino-Iranian families in Iran are financially well-off; a number of them have vacation or farm houses outside Tehran or along the scenic coast of the Caspian Sea in the north.

IRANIAN STUDENTS AND FILIPINO-IRANIAN FAMILIES

The Islamic Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 did not affect the good relations between the Philippines and Iran. The Philippines continued to accept the enrolment of Iranian students. A number of Iranian students and Iranian embassy personnel decided to remain in the Philippines while most of the Filipino wives of Iranians- doctors, dentists and nurses moved with their husbands to Iran. In 1981, there were 136 Iranian nationals registered as permanent residents in the Philippines.²⁸ In the 90s, many Iranians married to Filipinos who remained in the country were granted permanent residency while more than a dozen of them were bestowed Filipino citizenship. The earliest Iranian to acquire Filipino citizenship was Buick Bahador, a former soldier in the Shah's army who married a Filipina from Mabalacat, Pampanga in Tehran in 1979 and fled to the Philippines just before the advent of the Khomeini government.²⁹ After taking his oath as a Filipino citizen in 2006, Bahador who studied engineering in Manila and established himself as a contractor, real estate developer and civic leader in Pampanga exclaimed, "the Philippines is my home" and thanked his wife and son and the Filipino people for "accepting him" as a Filipino.³⁰

Filipino-Iranians are conscious and proud of their Filipino heritage. In every social occasion, they carry and promote the good image of the Filipino people and their motherland. The growing Filipino-Iranian community in Iran is active in socio-cultural activities, mostly aimed at raising funds for distressed Filipinos in Iran and victims of calamities in the Philippines.³¹

Many Iranians continue to send their children to study in the Philippines, mostly in the field of medicine, dentistry and engineering. A number of Iranians who graduated from schools in the Philippines hold high positions in various Iranian government agencies including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health and Medical Education and Roads and Transportation as well as in large companies in the oil and gas industries. In 2011, Iranian students numbering 3,225 ranked third in the total number of foreign students in the Philippines.

During the 27th FIBA Asia Championship in Manila in 2013, hundreds of flag-waving Iranians, mostly students flocked at the basketball venues to cheer and support their national team. All together, more than 7,000 Iranians reside in the Philippines, most of them students and businessmen. Now, in Metro Manila, one could see shops selling various Iranian products as well as Iranian restaurants serving the renowned Persian *kebabs*. With their *mestizo or mestiza* features, a number of Filipino-Iranians have gained celebrity status in the local entertainment industry and sports like Azkals' footballer Misagh Bahadoran. Indeed, people to people interaction, specifically the growing number of Filipino-Iranian families in both countries constitutes the strongest pillar of Philippine-Iran relations.

BILATERAL VISITS

Early cordial relations between the Philippines and Iran were demonstrated by high-level visits. Former First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos and daughter Imee represented President Ferdinand E. Marcos during the 1971 grand celebration of the 2,500 years of Iran's monarchy at the ancient ruins of Persepolis,³² the ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire together with six hundred guests from the world's elites - kings, queens, presidents, prime

ministers and other renowned celebrities. Mrs. Marcos who became a close friend of the Shah and Empress Farah again visited Iran in December 1973 to discuss bilateral issues with the king.³³

Foreign Affairs Secretaries Domingo Siazon, Blas Ople and Alberto Romulo visited Iran in 2000, 2003 and 2008 respectively. House Speaker Jose de Venecia visited Iran in 1995 while Vice President Jejomar Binay led a 17-member delegation to the 16th NAM Summit in Tehran in August 2012. The vice president held talks with Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the sideline of the summit. Other high-ranking Philippine officials also visited the Islamic Republic to attend bilateral meetings and international conferences and met with their Iranian counterparts.³⁴

On the other hand, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Hushang Ansary and his delegation visited Manila in 1976 to attend the IMF-World Bank Meeting and Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Ali Ardalan also visited the Philippines in 1979 to attend UNCTAD V. In 1998, *Majlis* (Parliament) Speaker Nateq Nouri led a 37-member parliamentary delegation to Manila. Other Iranian officials who visited the Philippines were Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Naser Kaleghi in 2003; Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi in 2004; Minister of Commerce Mohammad Shariatmadani and his 23-member delegation in 2004; Deputy Foreign Minister Mehdi Safari in 2008; FM Manoucher Mottaki in 2009, Deputy FM Hassan Ghashghavi in 2011 and Deputy FM and MFA Spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast in 2013. Dep. FM Ghashghavi again visited the Philippines in January 2014 and was followed some months later by the visit of Director General for East Asia and Oceania Abdulasul Mohajer Hejazi.

Close Philippine-Iran friendship and cooperation were highlighted by the visit to Iran of President Fidel V. Ramos on March 10 to 11, 1995 and the visit to the Philippines of his counterpart, President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani on October 7 to 8, 1995.³⁵ Several memoranda of understanding (MOUs) were signed during these presidential visits to further broaden bilateral relations.

BILATERAL TRADE

Despite the half a century of close and friendly relations between the Philippines and Iran, which are strengthened by more than sixty bilateral agreements aimed at promoting broader economic and socio-cultural cooperation, bilateral implementing activities, particularly on trade and investments, especially during the last decade have remained minimal if not stagnant.³⁶ This is mainly due to the constraints of "third party" interference in the country's foreign policy and the Philippine government's inability to assert its political will.³⁷ It is general knowledge that since the recognition of Philippine independence in 1946, Philippine foreign policy on issues vital to its former colonial master has been subjugated to the latter's interest.³⁸ The force of *realpolitik* is simply at play on Philippine foreign policy on the issue of U.S. economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic.³⁹ Moreover, the minimal growth of bilateral economic relations is further hampered by Filipino businessmen's inadequate information or inaccurate perceptions about the Islamic Republic.

Bilateral trade between the Philippines and Iran has remained slow- paced and as expected, always in favor of the latter as oil accounts roughly 80% of Philippine imports. In 2010, total trade amounted to USD 169,770,804.00 with only USD 59,517,900.00 for Philippine exports. In 2011, total trade was USD 904,117,349.00 with just USD 47,102,406.00 for Philippine exports.⁴⁰ Aside from crude petroleum oil and its by-products, the Philippines imports Iranian copper ore concentrate, ethylene, ammonium nitrate, bitumen and asphalt, scrap paper and lubricating oil.⁴¹ Iranian officials always assure Philippine authorities that even in times of crisis, Iran remains committed to supply oil to the Philippines when needed. Since 2012, however, the Philippines ceased importing Iranian oil due to U.S. sanctions on the Iranian banking system.

Agriculture products are the Philippines' main exports to Iran with bananas leading the list. In recent years, Iran emerged as the biggest importer of Philippine bananas in the Middle East and the third largest worldwide. Philippine bananas supply about 80% of the local market; the rest supplied by Central American countries. Other Philippine exports to Iran are pineapples, coconuts, dried fruits, melons, air-conditioning parts, boilers, plastics, resins, and

electrodes. With sanctions on bank remittances, Philippine exports to Iran have been adversely affected.

Despite the economic sanctions, Iranian government officials and businessmen continue to express their capability and readiness to invest or forge joint-ventures with their Filipino counterparts especially in the oil, gas and tourism industries. Ambassador Mohammadi continues to encourage Filipino businessmen to explore the huge Iranian market opportunities and introduce more products in the country.⁴² Aside from its huge local market, Iran, with its seaport in Bandar Abbas in the Persian Gulf and its railway to the Caspian Sea region in the north, is the gateway for shipments of goods to its northern neighbors - the emerging markets of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

With Iran's vast economic resources, capabilities and resiliency, the country's continued economic growth and expansion remain positive despite international economic sanctions. In 2012, Iran with a population of 78 million was ranked by the International Monetary Fund as 16th in the world's GDP/PPP with USD 988 billion and 75th with a per capita income of USD 12,986. Iran produces all its local needs - foodstuff, medicines, cars, trucks, fighter jets, drones, missiles, submarines, etc. In 2009, Iran ranked 5th in passenger car production in Asia with 1.6 million units of various brands - European, Japanese and Korean. However, in 2012, car production decreased by at least 20% due to banking sanctions. Positive growth for Philippine-Iran economic relations is expected once the various sanctions against the Islamic Republic are significantly eased or rescinded.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

During the global oil shortage in the late 60s and mid-70s brought about by the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, Iran readily supplied the Philippines with its oil needs at minimal cost. Even at the height of the Islamic Revolution, Iran accommodated the Philippines' request to buy oil at comparatively lower cost. It is noteworthy that contract for the purchase of USD 40 million worth

of Iranian oil was concluded in less than two hours of negotiation between Philippine and Iranian oil officials.⁴³ Moreover, a few months after the Islamic government assumed power in February 1979, militant university students stormed the U.S. Embassy compound in downtown Tehran and took sixty six American diplomats hostage. Not many Filipinos were aware that two Filipino employees at the embassy were also captured together with the American diplomats. They were Nestor Hidalgo of Rosario, Batangas and Angel Arpon of Malolos, Bulacan.⁴⁴ Their names were not included in the list of embassy hostages. With the able representations of Philippine Embassy Charge d' Affaires Rodolfo Arizala, the revolutionary guards released and turned over the two Filipinos to the embassy on November 22, 1979, eighteen days after their captivity.⁴⁵

The Iranian authorities also facilitated the issuance of exit visas and repatriation of the two Filipino hostages and that of the thousands of Filipino workers who opted to return to the Philippines. While fourteen of the 66 American hostages were released on humanitarian reasons, the remaining 52 were freed after 444 days - just after U.S. President Ronald Reagan took his oath of office on January 20, 1981. The early release of the two Filipino hostages was a hallmark of Philippine-Iran close friendship and cooperation.

Since MNLF leader Nur Misuari successfully introduced the "plight of Muslims" in Southern Philippines in the agenda and resolution of the 3rd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC - recently renamed Organization of Islamic Cooperation) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 1972 until the signing of the Jeddah Accord in 1987, and later in 2008 on the Philippine bid for "Observer" status in the OIC, the Philippine government focused its diplomatic engagements with OIC-member states including Iran on the following tasks:⁴⁶ information dissemination on the various Philippine government's political and socio-economic development programs in Muslim Mindanao meant to achieve a peaceful, just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the "Muslim" problem in southern Philippines; the solicitation of OIC-member countries' support for the Philippines vis-à-vis the MNLF's quest for self-determination and independence; and support for the Philippines' bid for "Observer" status in the OIC.

In the mid-70s, the MNLF has gained strong support from OIC-member countries. In an exceptional case, the OIC in 1977 granted "Observer" status to the MNLF during the 8th ICFM in Tripoli, Libya and recognized it as the sole representative of Muslims in the Philippines. Although Misuari claimed in his speech during the 12th ICFM in Baghdad in 1981 that the Islamic Republic of Iran was one of the many countries that supported the MNLF's bid for independence, the Islamic Republic of Iran remained on its "moderate" stance on the issue.⁴⁷ Instead, with Iran's support, the OIC pushed for the immediate implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement on the creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Moreover, Iran is one of the earliest Islamic countries that openly supported the Philippines' bid for "Observer" status in the OIC and likewise a strong supporter of the OIC-backed Philippine government's peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the recent historic comprehensive peace agreement mandating the creation of the Autonomous Bangsamoro Region in Muslim Mindanao.

On the other hand, the Philippine government has expressed its support for Iran's right to pursue its nuclear power program for peaceful use within the safeguards of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.⁴⁸ As a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran has been consistent in its position that its nuclear power program is meant for peaceful civilian energy and medical use.⁴⁹ On many occasions, Iranian leaders have expressed condemnation of terrorism. A victim of terrorists itself, Iran was one of the earliest Islamic countries to convey its strong condemnation of the 9/ 11 terrorist attacks in the United States and its sympathies to the victims' families. In an unprecedented move, thousands of people in Tehran - mostly young men and women held spontaneous street candlelight vigils in sympathy for the 9/11 victims.⁵⁰

The Philippines and Iran are leading proponents of interfaith dialogues to promote world peace. Iran has supported Philippine initiatives in interfaith conferences in various regional and international fora. The two countries are also leading advocates of former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's call for dialogues among civilizations and cultures to promote intercultural

understanding and cooperation to resolve global conflicts. The Philippines and Iran held their unprecedented bilateral conference on Dialogue among Civilizations in 2003 with its "Makati Declaration" calling on governments and civil societies to actively promote sincere dialogues among nations to understand, appreciate and respect cultural diversity to avoid hostilities.⁵¹

At the forefront in promoting interfaith dialogues, the Philippines also hosted the Special Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development in 2009. To attain deeper mutual understanding, respect, closer cooperation and peace between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines through interfaith dialogues, the Bishops-*Ulama* Conference composed of forty Catholic bishops and pastors and twenty four *ulama* or Islamic clerics was formed.

The Philippines and Iran have closely cooperated in the campaign against human trafficking, illegal drugs, and assisting distressed nationals. Through the Interpol and other law enforcement agencies of both governments, the trafficking of persons especially women and children as well as illegal drugs is pursued and addressed. With its long porous borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iran is the exit and transit point of illegal drugs bound to all corners of the world. As drug trafficking and addiction are major concerns in the country, Iran imposes the death penalty to persons convicted of possession of just 30 grams of illegal drugs.⁵²

Assistance to distressed nationals is a key element in Philippine-Iran relations. With the compassionate and humanitarian spirit of the Iranian leadership upon Filipinos in Iran, no Filipino drug convict was meted the capital punishment. In 2012, a Filipina who was convicted to death for possession of a record 27 kilos of illegal drugs was saved just eight hours before her scheduled execution when Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei responded kindly to President Aquino's appeal for forgiveness!⁵³ It is hoped that the court sentences of the dozen more Filipino inmates will be commuted to enable them to return to their families at the earliest time possible.

Although there is no death penalty in the Philippines, Iranian officials expect fair treatment and immediate cooperation in assisting Iranians in distress in the Philippines. Philippine authorities have fully cooperated in the investigation of the tragic

bus accident in Balamban, Cebu in 2011, which cost the lives of 21 Iranian medical and nursing students and in seeking compensation for the victims' families as well as the repatriation of their remains to their homeland. Appropriate assistance is also being extended to Iranians facing various infractions in the country. It is unfortunate that in August 2014, an Iranian national died while in custody of Philippine authorities.⁵⁴

During the onslaught of super typhoon Yolanda in November 2013 that ravaged Leyte and Samar in the Visayas, Iran joined the international community in its outpouring sympathies and relief assistance to the typhoon victims. Iran sent a fully equipped medical team from its Red Crescent to attend to the immediate needs of the sick and wounded survivors in Tacloban, Ormoc and other disaster areas in the two provinces. Relief foodstuff and clothes were likewise given to the typhoon victims. The thousands of Iranian students in the Philippines likewise contributed cash and purchased food packages for the typhoon survivors.⁵⁵

CLOSER CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

Beyond Iran's trademarks of carpets, caviar and its western tag as a "terrorist" country, Filipinos, like many other nationalities have little or inaccurate information about Iran and its people. For decades, mainstream western media has clouded Iran's image that knowledgeable western observers and writers acknowledge that Iran is the most misunderstood country in the world.⁵⁶ For many people, the mention of Iran immediately conjures images of suicidal Islamic *jihadists*, bomb-wielding terrorists and *mullahs* busily plotting terrorist acts against the West specifically the United States and its allies.⁵⁷

In pursuit of bilateral, regional and global peace and development, it is imperative for Philippine officials to exert more efforts in understanding not only current Iranian political and economic developments but also the intricacies and lessons of Iranian history and culture from which emanate the totality of Iranian national identity, character and aspirations. In many aspects, Iranians are a different, if not unique people, not only from their Arab neighbors but other Muslims in the Islamic world.

Iranians are not Arabs; they are racially, historically and culturally different from them. Iranians are the descendants of the Indo-European Aryan race from Eastern Europe and central northwestern Asia.⁵⁸ They are the proud progenies of more than 10,000 years of Iranian history and civilization - the grandeur of Persepolis, one of the capitals of the great Persian Empire, the first world power that decreed mankind's first human rights charter (Cyrus Cylinder) that freed the Jews from Babylonian captivity and allowed them to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple;⁵⁹ the legendary Silk Road trade and cultural highways that forged East-West civilizations;⁶⁰ and their ingrained ancestors' basic concerns - family welfare, peace, love, happiness, prayer, justice, courage, nature, and the refinement of life under the watchful eyes of their Almighty God as advocated by their revered poets - Rumi, Rudaki, Ferdowsi, Omar Khayyam, Sa'adi, and Hafez.

Although Iran was conquered and Islamized by Muslim Arabs in the 7th century, Iranians have retained much of their Zoroastrian cultural heritage especially their language (*Farsi*) and form of writing. Moreover, Iranians are *Shi'ites* - their Islamic faith that differs from that of mainstream Arabs' *Sunni* Islam. Iranians are followers of the Twelver *Shi'a* Islam - its doctrines fortified by Imam Khomeini's revolutionary Islamic ideals, values and principles of governance by the clergy to prepare for the reappearance of the 9th century "hidden" 12th Imam Mahdi to defeat all evils and rule the world in peace, justice and prosperity.⁶¹ These are the basic tenets Islamic Republic's domestic and foreign policy thrusts. And lest it be taken for granted, it must be emphasized that although Iranians may differ in their views on certain internal policy issues, their deeply imbued obligatory Islamic nationalism, voluntary self-sacrifice for martyrdom and unconditional unity in defense of their country arise to its heights in times of external aggression.⁶²

IRAN'S NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM

Since the 1960s, Iran, even with its vast strategic energy resources of oil and gas started to develop nuclear power knowing that fossil fuels are not endless. Through the years, Iran continued to develop its nuclear power for civilian energy

uses until the early 2000s when the West was alarmed over reports that the country aims to produce nuclear weapons. Iran currently maintains its nuclear research/reactors in Ramsar, Bonab, Karaz, and Tehran; its nuclear plants in Arak, Ardakan, Darkovin, Fordo, Natanz, Isfahan, and Bushehr; and its uranium mines in Saghand, Yazd and Gachin.⁶³

The more than a decade conflict between Iran and the West (P5+1: US, Russia, China, UK, France, and Germany) over Iran's nuclear power program is a potential flashpoint⁶⁴ of a regional or global military conflict. The Philippines support Iran's nuclear power program for peaceful use under the supervision of the IAEA and the NPT.⁶⁵ Iran has been consistent in its position that its nuclear program is meant for peaceful energy and medical use;⁶⁶ that it is Iran's indispensable right in the pursuit of its national interests.

To emphasize the goal of Iran's nuclear policy, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei issued a *fatwa* (Islamic decree) stating that Islam prohibits the production and use of nuclear weapons.⁶⁷ However, the West, led by the United States believes that Iran's nuclear program has military dimensions; that it is geared to produce nuclear bombs;⁶⁸ and that the nuclear program must be curbed or limited to prevent it from attaining nuclear weapons capability.⁶⁹

The lingering Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Iran's non-recognition of the State of Israel and "Islamic terrorism" are issues of grave security concerns for the West and are the main reasons for curtailing Iran's nuclear activities. The United States has threatened to use its military option to stop Iran from producing nuclear weapons if negotiations fail.⁷⁰ An escalation of the issue into a military confrontation would plunge the region and the world into a catastrophic war. Any foreign attack to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities would result into a global oil crisis that will hit hard oil-importing countries like the Philippines. In case of foreign aggression, Iran threatened to immediately close the strategic Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf where 65% of the world's daily oil supply passes through.⁷¹ Aside from a crippling global oil shortage, the life and employment of the estimated more than three million Filipino workers in the Middle East and North Africa would be endangered. Iran and the West must cooperate and work together along the peaceful route of diplomacy to resolve the nuclear conflict.

The 'historic deal' between Iran and the West in the nuclear talks in Geneva in November 2013 augurs well not only for the two sides but for the global community.⁷² The search for a mutually beneficial settlement of the issue has been extended to November 24, 2014 but the deadline lapsed without an agreement. Iran and the West agreed to further extend the talks until the end of June 2015 in view of "positive signs." Commenting on the extension of the nuclear talks, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said the talks were "tough" but with "substantial progress." He warned, however, "we're not going to sit at the negotiating table forever." For his part, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said, "most gaps narrowed" during the talks but emphasized that "enrichment will continue; that nuclear technology in Iran will continue."⁷³ Supreme Leader Khamenei who has the final say on Iran's foreign relations supports the extension of the talks, saying: "I do not disagree with the extension of the negotiations, as I have not disagreed with the negotiations in the first place." Khamenei, however, took the opportunity to criticize the U.S. for its "bullying and excessive demands" in the negotiations.⁷⁴

Reacting on the extension of the nuclear talks, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, "no deal is better than a bad deal."⁷⁵ Israel fears a nuclear-armed Iran as a threat to its survival and has warned several times in the past of pre-emptive attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities but was refrained from such unilateral actions by the United States.

Both sides aspire for a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the nuclear issue within the extended period. With pragmatist Iranian President Rouhani who has shown sincerity, moderation and determination to settle the nuclear controversy including possible rapprochement with the United States, all countries of goodwill including the Philippines support and aspire for the success of the nuclear talks that would usher a new era of global peace, security and prosperity.

FUTURE OUTLOOK OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

Much more mutual initiatives are needed to spur Philippine-Iran relations. Currently, many of the more than sixty bilateral MOUs on economic, socio-cultural and consular cooperation remain just on paper. For the

Philippines, there is need for concerned authorities to exert more efforts in cultural diplomacy, which a number of countries have shown to be an effective long-term avenue of promoting bilateral relations.⁷⁶ With keen interest and positive attitude, one could learn and better understand the cultural traits and values Iranians openly ascribe to themselves: hospitality, peace, tolerance, compassion, mutual respect and friendly co- existence. With their innate character traits molded by their history and cultural heritage and tempered by their nationalist Islamic fervor, Iranians at the negotiating table expect sincerity, fairness, equality, and mutual respect from the other party. Any show of arrogance, superiority or threat from their counterparts will derail the path toward fruitful negotiations.

Looking into the future prospects of over-all Philippine-Iran relations, one finds not only the incessant constraints of "third party interference" and the force of *realpolitik* but also the solid foundations of increasing people to people relations, specifically the growing number of Filipino-Iranian families as well as the inherent stock of goodwill and mutual desire for closer friendship and cooperation. The two countries' socio-cultural diversities and commonalities boosted by intercultural dialogues and deeper mutual understanding will continue to broaden and strengthen Philippine-Iran relations.

As a key dimension of Philippine-Iran relations, a peaceful, just, comprehensive, and lasting resolution of the nuclear power conflict between Iran and the Western powers and a rapprochement between Iran and the United States would certainly eliminate the current "barriers" of Philippine- Iran relations and propel the growth of mutually beneficial relations for the good of Filipinos and Iranians in the next 50 years and beyond.

NOTES

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- 15 *The History and Activities of the Philippine Embassy and Filipino Community in Iran*. 2012. Tehran: Embassy of the Philippines, p. 6.
- 16 Ibid, 7.
- 17 Ibid.

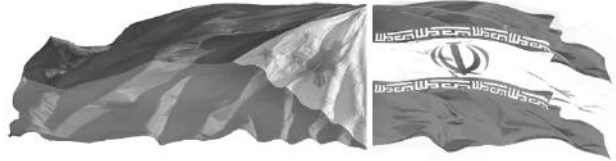
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of Philippines-Iran Relations

- 53 Upon learning of the convict's scheduled execution two days earlier (during the weekend), this writer immediately informed DFA Undersecretary Esteban Conejos on the need for a last minute presidential request for forgiveness from Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. Malacanang and the DFA immediately sent the letter to Tehran and the Supreme Leader acted favorably, saving the life of the Filipina (Jinky) just eight hours before her scheduled execution (hanging).
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- 55 Information gathered from interviews with Ambassador Ali Asghar Mohammadi and officials of the Cultural Section of the Iranian Embassy in Makati on March 11 and 18 2014.
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A THEORETICAL STUDY: Iran's Islamic Revolution and the Filipino People Power

Dr. Potre Diampuan

Regional Coordinator, Asia and Pacific Inter-Faith Dialogue

ABSTRACT

To dwell into a theoretical study of Iran's Islamic Revolution and the Filipino People Power necessitates zeroing in on the six theories about the *Islamic Revolution's Victory* composed of several articles and edited by Seyed Sadegh Haghighi at as my point of departure for the discourse without prejudice to other concepts that come to interplay with the above mentioned theories. The *conspiracy theory*, *modernization theory*, *theory of economy* as the cause of revolution, *theory of religion* as the cause of the revolution, *theory of despotism and dictatorship* as the roots of revolution, and the *theory of religious leadership* will give form and shape to the discourse to examine the points of comparison and points of contrast.

In the process, essentially, the pre-revolution scenarios in both countries will be presented as a prelude to the development of the two revolutions that enticed the people to voluntarily and actively participate and the formation of the critical mass of people and who later evolved to become the street parliamentarians and the protesters. Close examination of the two revolutions reveals that while there are points of convergence, there are also points of significant divergence. Iran's revolution has constantly and consistently claimed that it is Islamic or religious in nature. On the other hand, the Philippine People Power Revolution was a struggle to bring back democracy to the country. Islam and democracy are two ideologies that are certainly two differing systems

of government and perspectives. The strength of religious leaders and church people became the powerful tools to call out to the people.

However, although the religious leaders in both revolutions played critical roles to entice people to come out into the open to express defiance, dismay, and in open disobedience, the battle cries are not similar. A general overview of the differences between Islamic form of government and democracy will have a space in the discussion. Dictatorship (under authoritarianism) and autocracy as forms of government will also come into play.

KEYWORDS: Iran Islamic Revolution, Theories, Modernization theory, Democracy, Islam, Religion, People Power Revolution

INTRODUCTION

My assigned topic today is "Iran's Islamic Revolution And The Filipino People Power: A Theoretical Study." Journalists, political analysts and scholars/researchers and more have undoubtedly feasted upon these two revolutions. The political lives and regimes of both dictators are both engaging and deserving study as part of the unfolding of world leaders history.

Due to the brevity of the discourse limited at twenty minutes, everything shall be very brief, thus, every aspect is merely the tip of the iceberg. I have divided this lecture into three brief categories. First, I will dwell briefly on the background of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and Ferdinand Edralin Marcos including a commonness that they shared in terms of their "colored" revolutions, their US relationships, and their flights that both landed in the United States. Second, I will focus on the "Six Theories about the Islamic Revolution," a compilation of both journalistic articles (lacking dependence on reliable sources and offered more as personal perceptions) and materials resulting from studies and theoretical perspectives (offered altogether edited by Seyed Sadegh Haghighat. Third, I shall devote a brief space to compare Islam and democracy considering that Iran's Revolution was religious or Islamic in nature and the Philippines' People Power was aimed at the restoration of democracy.

"Six Theories about the Islamic Revolution" edited by Seyed Sadegh Haghighat

has two categories of writing: one is from the journalistic aspect, which are not scientific; and those articles that were products of study and theoretical perspectives. The journalistic aspect are claimed to analyze the revolution but these writings do not offer research value given the lack of being good references because of their lack of dependence on reliable sources and the weight given to their personal perceptions. Unlike the former, the writings, which were the results of studies, were more trustworthy because they offer valuable information by relying on both formal and informal documents and evidence and also personal experiences.

I have decided to juxtapose the two personalities that figured in the two revolutions but without ignoring the other two personalities who also figured prominently on the other side of the courts in both revolutions. These personalities are the protagonists and the villains depending on where one allies with in terms of belief.

In Iran, it was the former Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi; in the Philippines, it was the former president, Ferdinand Edralin Marcos. In Iran, religious leader and politician, Imam Ruhollah Mostafavi Moosavi Khomeini, who saw to the overthrow of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi that culminated on the 1979 Iranian Revolution. In the Philippines, Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, Jr. formed the leadership of the opposition to the government of Marcos that culminated to his death on August 21, 1983.

A BIT ABOUT THE SHAH AND MARCOS

Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was the son of the former Shah of the Kingdom of Iran, Reza Shah Pahlavi, who ruled from 1925 until 1941.¹ When the young Shah was born on October 26, 1919, his father believed that his birth came as a "bird of good omen," thus, he was groomed to be on line to the throne². To use an old idiom, the Shah was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

Ferdinand Edralin Marcos, a topnotch lawyer, was three times elected as representative of the 2nd district of Ilocos Norte from 1949 to 1959. He made his way to the Senate as senator in 1959, became Senate President. He became President of the Republic in 1965. The young Marcos proved himself as one of the brilliant lawyers the

Philippines has ever produced. He was born to his father, Mariano Marcos who was a politician himself, whom the young Ferdinand Marcos won acquittal for his father on an assassination case.³

The Shah of Iran reigned from 1941 until 1979, a period of 38 years. Marcos reigned as head of state of the Philippines from 1965 until 1986, a period of 20 years.

"COLORED REVOLUTIONS"

Both the Shah and Marcos implemented a package of reforms prefixed with a color as a matter of description directed at transforming their respective countries to be on the global map.

The Shah carried out his *White Revolution* in the mid-1960s packaging economic, social and political reforms for the modernization process of Iran by "nationalizing certain industries and granting women suffrage."⁴

In the Philippines, President Marcos introduced an agriculture-based *Green Revolution*⁵ through the introduction of new rice (rice is the foundation of the Philippine economy) technology intended to produce more and more high yielding varieties, thus, an increased food production. Other agricultural products were seen to have raised production. The Philippines in 1962 saw its successes in the export market for its soaring agricultural products.

US RELATIONS

The Shah's diplomatic foundation was the United States' expressed guarantee that they would protect him was what enabled him to stand up to larger enemies.⁶ While the arrangement did not preclude partnerships and treaties with others aside from the United States, it nonetheless supported the Shah in setting the stage where he was able to install his kind of reforms.

On the other hand, Marcos's close ties with the United States, among other things, is expressly demonstrated by then US vice president George Bush during the former's inauguration in June 1981 when the latter said: "We love your adherence to democratic principles and to the democratic process, and we will not leave you in isolation."⁷

THE FINAL FLIGHT

The conspiracy theory that was believed to have supported both regimes of the shah and Marcos was also vehemently believed to have then taken out of their respective countries at the culminating hour of each revolution. The Shah was taken by US Air Force jet to the Kelly Air Force Base in Texas. Marcos and his family were airlifted by a US Air Force jet to Hawaii.

THEORIES

(This discourse has been heavily lifted from Haghighat's edited articles on the Six Theories about the Islamic Revolution's Victory.)

The world saw a shift of the use of theories of revolution from the French, Russian and Chinese experiences in the recent decades with the emergence of conflicts and revolutions in the third world. Studies of uprisings and revolutions have expanded to include the third world countries such as Iran and the Philippines more particularly in the late 1970s. After the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran, a number of analyses emerged in voluminous articles and books on its causes and nature. The articles compiled on the "Six Theories about the Islamic Revolution's Victory" edited by Seyed Sadegh Haghighat accordingly came from two sources, those from the journalists which are "not scientific" and those contributed by researchers and theoreticians.

These theories are attempts to explain the phenomena of the Iranian Islamic Revolution and Filipino People Power Revolution.

Conspiracy Theory

The elite monarchists of Iran vehemently believed that the revolution in Iran was planned and inspired by America and England and as such, was not the will of the people. The Shah believed that there was an element of jealousy at the end of the Western powers when Iran was "advancing more than any other country in the world." Ironically, in a huge part of the Shah's regime, the Shah relied so much on the Americans as his allies.

Marcos felt his dismay when he phoned US Senator Paul Laxalt seeking his advice at the height of the People Power on February 25, 1986 who in turn only

responded by saying, "cut and cut cleanly." Feeling without a glimpse of assurance, Marcos and his family boarded a US Air Force HH- 3E rescue helicopters en route to Hawaii.

Modernization Theory

The modernization theory is a theory of development (others include the dependency theory, the world systems theory, and the state theory), which is interpreted with the idea that development can be achieved through following the processes of development that were used by the current developed countries.

Muslim thinkers and ideologists associate Islam with struggles against colonialism and domination particularly by the Western Powers. Shah Pahlavi's consistent move towards western culture was naturally resisted and abhorred by the Iranian masses and more particularly, by the clerics.

In the Philippines, Marcos' wide-ranging reforms aimed at economic and social reforms attracted and surely enticed foreign support such as the World Bank that at the end 25 years of rule, the government was heavily indebted. As a Filipino, who was around during Marcos 20-year rule up until the People Power Revolution, I saw the developments and structures put in place that are products of the modernization theory thinking. Similarly, I also saw many of the downfalls of the political system and corruption interlaced with all the developments going around without underscoring the furtive and clandestine efforts either against or using the Muslims. A popular example of this was Marcos's ambition to claim Sabah, now a part of the federal government of Malaysia, resulting into the fateful Jabidah massacre of young Muslims in Corregidor, Bataan.

Theory of Economy

In Iran, economy was progressing; however, recession ensued. It was reported that in 1975, oil production fell by 20%, so that in 1976 the state owed 3 billion dollars to contractors; budget suffered a deficit of USD2.4B later to be paid through negotiated international loans. In addition, the Shah's coronation, the lavish celebration of what is believed to be the mythical 2500th anniversary

of the Persian monarchy, the huge estates of the Pahlavi Foundation owning the four leading hotels in Iran, and the purchase of DePinna building in New York valued at USD14.5 million.

Similarly in the Philippines, the progress of reform became visible but not after 1975. Many of the government programs like land reform resulted into corruption making cronies filthy rich. Major projects that do not match the country's skills and enormous corruption made the Philippines fall into the trap of international loans that reached an astonishing USD28.3 billion in 1986. The positive economic growth gained became speedily was caught up by negative economic growth despite recovery efforts.

Theory of Religion

Time was when the people of Iran referred to the Shah as having stepped into Islam. The de-Islamizing policy was so that it hurt the Muslim sentiments and instigated them to deal with the regime. Reforms were inserted into the shariah-based laws on marriage guardianship of children, divorce and family law. To cite an example, guardianship of a child depended on the merits of the case and that husband cannot take a second marriage unless with the consent of the first wife. Islamic calendar, which is reckoned with the migration of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) from Mecca to Medina, has been replaced by one that is referenced with the beginning of the reign of Cyrus, the Great.

The Filipino People Power Revolution, unlike Iran's, was a people's response for the eradication of dictatorship and the restoration of democracy. Religion only played an important role in the revolution when the leadership of the Catholic Church led the calling for the largest number of people to come out of their homes and join the others at the stretch of Epifanio delos Santos Avenue, the venue of People Power.

Dictatorship Theory

Pahlavi ruled Iran in dictatorship. In 1975, Pahlavi installed the one- party system under the Resurrection Party or *Raztakhiz* abolishing the multi- party system of government. To quote his own words in his justification, he said, "We must straighten out Iranians' ranks. To do so, we divide them into two categories: those who believe in Monarchy, the constitution and the Six Bahman Revolution and those who don't... A person who does not enter the new political party and does not believe in the three cardinal principles will have only two choices. He is either an individual who belongs to an illegal organization, or is related to the outlawed Tudeh Party, or in other words a traitor. Such an individual belongs to an Iranian prison, or if he desires he can leave the country tomorrow, without even paying exit fees; he can go anywhere he likes, because he is not Iranian, he has no nation, and his activities are illegal and punishable according to the law." He decreed that all Iranian people and the other remaining political parties must join and become part of Raztakhiz.

And when knew that he was ill with cancer, he initiated to pass the throne to his son, who was still a minor.

Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law on September 23, 1972. As a prelude to this political landscape, roots of unrest were created: human rights violations against individuals who spoke in opposition to the government, imprisonment of political foes, staged attacks or ambush of government officials, and the creation of anti-Muslim groups in Mindanao. All these and more were cited as rising disobedience and have created the stage for rallies and street parliaments, student unrests, etc. Constitutionally, Marcos cannot run another term for the presidency. To many, the declaration of Martial Law was the gateway to staying in and seizing power. Like the Shah, Marcos dissolved the Philippine Congress and moved into a unicameral parliamentary system with a new constitution replacing the old. Ferdinand Marcos had set up a regime in the Philippines that would give him ultimate power over the military and the national treasury.

Theory of Religious Leadership

In Iran, religious leadership factored in as critical to the Iran Islamic

Revolution and this was the religious leadership of Imam Khomeini (R.A.). The Theory of Religion as explained above explains the need for the emergence of a Shi'ite cleric leader.

In the Philippines, one of the leading Philippine Church personalities condemned the result of the snap election (where Marcos won again!) by making the declaration that "a government does not of itself freely correct the evil it has inflicted on the people then it is our serious moral obligation as a people to make it do so." The declaration also asked "every loyal member of the Church, every community of the faithful, to form their judgment about the February 7 polls" and told all the Filipinos "[n]ow is the time to speak up. Now is the time to repair the wrong. The wrong was systematically organized. So must its correction be. But as in the election itself, that depends fully on the people; on what they are willing and ready to do."

Philippine Archbishop Cardinal Sin appealed over Radio Veritas exhorting the Filipinos to go to Epifanio delos Santos Avenue between Camps Crame and Aguinaldo to support the rebel leaders in every way possible: to bring food and drink, emotional and moral support, other supplies, or simply be physically present. People within the Metro Manila area and the surrounding nearby cities and provinces came to join the people on the streets.

ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY: A COMPARISON

I would like to give space to a brief discourse on the comparison of democracy and Islam as these two are two different ideologies - Islam and democracy - as the *raison d'être* for the Iran Revolution and the People Power Revolution, respectively.

Allow me to go back a bit in time about the beginnings of this form of government called *democracy*. A small state in Greece in the olden days practiced a form of governance that is governed known by the philosophers at that time as democracy. However, even at that time, a number of Greek philosophers considered democracy to be unbefitting, weak, and a corrupt form of governance. One philosopher said that one of the problems of democracy was that the leader has always to pamper the people to get their support. So a leader

cannot take the morally sound decisions to make unless the people support him. Already hundreds of years ago they have discussed the weaknesses and deficiencies of the system. Only in relatively recent history that the idea of democracy has been re-introduced and re-invented as spread first by France, the Britain, and then America professing that democracy should be the ideal of human governance to govern their affairs.

What follows are the matrices on the basic differences between Islam and democracy. For a lack of material time, I am only able to explain so little but I hope the matrix gives you a good bird's eye view of the topic. This is not a comprehensive presentation of the differences of Islam and democracy but it is an attempt at showing you quickly in terms of politics, economy, social, education, and religious rituals.

I would like to mention the most important aspect of Islam. Sovereignty resides only Allah and that only Allah has the right to legislate. And everything proceeds from here.

This principle of the unity of Allah totally negates the concept of the legal and political independence of human beings, individually or collectively. No individual, family, class or race can set themselves above Allah. Allah alone is the Ruler and His commandments are the Law. God's legislations for mankind as prescribed in the Holy Quran are the only laws that man should abide, Divinely made laws, not man-made. This idea is aimed also at inviting the non-Muslim Filipinos who are here today to understand the reason that Muslims in the Philippines have been struggling for real autonomy in consideration of the institutions that Muslims must live by.

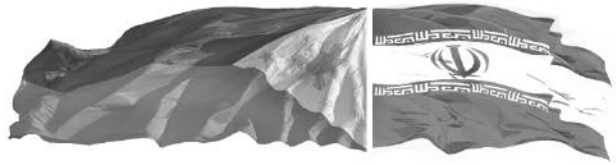
A THEORETICAL STUDY: Iran's Islamic Revolution and the Filipino People Power

NO.	ASPECT OF LIFE	ISLAMIC CONCEPT	DEMOCRATIC CONCEPT
I	POLITICS		
	SOVEREIGNTY	ALLAH (GOD)	THE PEOPLE
	PRINCIPLES	Tawheed, Risalat, Khilafat & Shoorah	A government for the people, by the people, and of the people
	SOURCES OF LAWS	Qur'an, Sunnah, Jihad, Ijma, Qiyyas, Istihsan, AH Masaalih, AH Mursalah, Urf	The Constitution, Legislation, Customary Laws, Jurisprudence, Court Decision (precedent)
	STRUCTURE	Khaliifa/Ameer/Al Mu'meneen/ Ahlul Hali wal Aqd/ Ahlus Shoorah	3 branches of government
	QUALIFICATION OF A LEADER	Strong (physically & mentally) And Trustworthy	Citizen, meet age requirement (even prisoner)
	RESPONSIBILITY	Main responsibility is to safeguard and propagate Islam, hence, the leader can, at least, lead prayer	A secular leader is not responsible for Islam
	ACCOUNTABILITY	As a vicegerent of Allah, he is accountable to Him	As a secular leader, he is accountable to the people and, therefore, must serve them
	MANNER OF ESTABLISHMENT	No self-nomination. One party system. Direct or indirect voting	Self-nomination, multi-party system, direct or indirect election
	FOREIGN POLICY	No national boundaries, eradication of nationalism and tribalism. Jihad, Da'wah	Recognize national boundaries, encourage nationalism and even recognize tribalism
	JUDICIAL SYSTEM	Shariah Islameeyah	Administrative, civil & criminal

No.	Aspect of Life	Islamic concept	Democratic concept
II	<p>ECONOMY- Principle</p> <p>- Production and Consumption</p> <p>- Wealth Distribution</p>	<p>- Interest-free and welfare economy</p> <p>- Halal</p> <p>- Equal opportunity (every citizen is assured of basic necessities such as food, shelter, medical education). Inheritance law</p>	<p>- Capitalism or communism</p> <p>- Both halal and haraam.</p> <p>- Monopoly and hoarding</p> <p>- Wide economic gap of the poor and the rich</p>
III	<p>SOCIAL</p> <p>- Family</p> <p>- Community</p>	<p>- Each member has a distinct role with the male the leader; forbids abortion in all forms</p> <p>- Ummah - wahidah and wasata with members as brothers to one another</p>	<p>- Equality of gender without distinction of role. Encourage birth control to ensure promising economy</p> <p>- Individualistic, tribalistic, & regionalistic</p>
IV	EDUCATION	<p>Relation of man to Allah first before worldly matters (Building Islamic Personalities)</p>	Worldly matters only
V	RELIGIOUS RITUALS	Sahadah, Salah, Zakat, Sawm, Hajj	- Individual freewill

NOTES

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MOVEMENTS FOR CHANGE: The Islamic Revolution in Iran and People Power in the Philippines

Zainab M. Javier

Writer & Member, Muslim Women's Center for Change

ABSTRACT

At two distinct times in the recent past two peoples, oceans apart but one at following the dictates of the heart, hopped into the carriage of change taking the reins in their hands. Pining for a better tomorrow, Iranians and Filipinos took to the streets, braving guns and tanks, ushering reforms that changed the course of their respective destinies.

What was their reality that they wanted changed? What did they cherish in their vision? What gave them the resolve to bravely take on the hurdles that faced them?

This paper delineates two popular movements in recent history that showed the world the viability of popular belief in changing social structures: the Islamic Revolution of Iran that culminated in the flight of the Shah and the eventual establishment of the Islamic Republic, and the People Power in EDSA that prompted then President Marcos to flee with his family, freeing the Philippines from his dictatorship.

In analyzing the distinctions of these movements, a comparison will be made as to their respective nature and scope. What were the preconditions? What were the predominant forces at play? What change did the people exactly want? In order to understand the motivating force that influenced the respective peoples to leave the security of their homes and come out to the streets, the slogans that were used to rally the people will be analyzed. Did these two have an

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impact on the mindset of other peoples of the world? How did other governments welcome these two revolutions?

In conclusion, this paper will attempt to show whether these two movements were successful as far as attaining their respective goals is concerned.

KEYWORDS: Social movement approach, Iran Islamic Revolution, EDSA Revolution, People Power in the Philippines

*All praise belongs to God
Who created time and space and set everything in the universe in motion;
Who made galaxies float in spheres as planets within them go in circles;
Who made the earth orbit the sun changing seasons,
And with its spinning, turning night into day.*

*All greatness belongs to the Mighty Lord
Who breathed into dry clay His Spirit,
Making man grow from a mere clot with body and soul
Moving through this realm of manifestation
to grow into another form in a different realm of existence*

*All glory belongs to the Compassionate and Merciful King
Who gave man eyes that see, ears that hear, mind that ponders
and a resonant heart that perceives the order in the universe,
rendering love of God man's nature
With justice and freedom intrinsic beatings of his heart.*

INTRODUCTION

If there is one thing constant in this world, it is change.

Abreast with time, all of creation goes through the different stages of change. However, man has the distinction of being a partner to time in his ongoing transformation. Compared to all the other species in the animal kingdom, only he directly impacts the course and outcome of his evolution.

Man's involvement corresponds to his volition. It is up to him whether he opts to be a willing and conscious collaborator in directing his destiny or squander the opportunity and simply become a passive and unwitting partner.

Of all creation, it is only man who appreciates and hankers after beauty and perfection, making wanting to know more and do better his natural bent. Thus, utilizing his built-in faculty, man was able to alter his lot from that of a stone-wielding caveman to that of a rocket-flying spaceman.

However, due to a lopsided view of the world that puts emphasis merely on the material dimension of man, the present state of the world indicates two opposing trajectories.

On one side, man soars high with advancements in science and technology creating robots and building stations in space. With innovations in telecommunications, the expansive world is now a mere global village. Life has also become much easier for those who can afford, what with the material implements readily available due to this great leap in science.

Scientific research, likewise, got the much needed boost that opened more avenues in understanding the complex human system. From the conventional view that focuses on the brain as the source of consciousness, a shift was affected to the current stance that consciousness actually emerges from the brain and body working together,¹ with the heart playing a particularly significant role in the process. Today, the heart is no longer regarded a mere blood pumping organ but a highly sophisticated complex system that generates a powerful electromagnetic field 5,000 times more powerful than that of the brain.² Not only that, research shows that the heart also sends signals to the brain that activates it more profoundly, and that the heart also acts as a sophisticated antenna that also connects with the electromagnetic field outside accessing information. Despite limitations of available devices at this time, this recent finding establishing the link between the heart and the different organs of the body and the significant effect of emotions, especially love and appreciation, on the total wellbeing and efficacy of man is indeed very promising.

However, the other trend is grim and outright evil.

Despite the existence of a 193-member state United Nations Organization that is supposedly the hallmark of brotherhood and equality of men, state-of-the-art stealth helicopters with hyper-spectral image

processing cameras sneak through the dead of the night for covert operations enabling elite forces to pump their MP5 machine guns with nary a care. Of course, not only nocturnal operations benefit from these advancements, the lives and homes of "other" people are also blown into oblivion using the latest bombs, even in broad daylight. All these are arrogantly carried out with the go signal from the Situation Room in the name of upholding democracy and freedom in total disrespect for human life and territorial integrity and absolute disregard for international law.

Of course, for many people the world is still okay since this is not happening to everyone, but only to those living in unfortunate places and times. For the majority who are living "normal lives," images of atrocities like these are akin to scenes in Hollywood films. Yes, they invoke empathy and compassion but only up to a point. Deeply preoccupied with endeavours significant in attaining success in life, these gruesome images are deleted from the consciousness of the many as soon as the news clip ends. But of course, there is always presence of mind to take a "selfie."

This is modern-day reality, where advancement in science and technology which is supposed to usher in a better life for all of humanity is just enjoyed to the fullest by a few and used instead by advanced states to maintain their control of power through manipulation, subjugation and extermination of man.

It is against this backdrop that two incidents revealing a glimpse of the beauty of the human spirit and the power of love for God are reviewed with the hope that some insights may be gained to help resuscitate the gasping breaths of justice and freedom, and thereby contribute to the reversal of the dismal trend.

PRE-REVOLUTION SCENARIOS

The post-World War II global political landscape was carved through victors sharing the spoils of war and installing national leaders who pursued the dominating state's interests, of course, to the detriment of the people of the underdeveloped nations.

And so in Iran, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was installed by the Allies who deposed his father in 1941 by an invasion of allied British and Soviet troops who

believed his father to be sympathetic with the Allies' enemy, Germany. The Shah also owed his political survival to the U.S. and Britain when President Eisenhower agreed with the British and ordered the CIA to embark on Operation Ajax, a covert operation against the government of Prime Minister Mossadeq who nationalised Iran's British-owned oil fields.³

Operation Ajax undermined Mossadeq's government by bribing influential figures, planting false reports in newspapers and provoking street violence.⁴ On August 19, 1953, Mossadeq was forced from power and the Shah took over.

The U.S. benefited from this "shift" in political discourse; the U.S. gained control over Iranian oil and redistributed British production shares to U.S. companies. U.S. corporations acquired 40 percent of Iran's oil, Anglo-Iranian Oil's (the British corporation later renamed British Petroleum) share was reduced to 40 percent while French and Dutch companies acquired the other 20 percent.⁵

The Iranians, on the other hand, did not benefit from the change in government nor did they reap the profits of its natural resource, oil. To maintain power, the Shah never shied away from the use of large numbers of US military advisers and technicians, granting them diplomatic immunity from prosecution. The CIA helped establish Pahlavi's covert and repressive police force, which tortured, executed, and arrested thousands of Iranian citizens. U.S. Major General Norman Schwarzkopf Jr. trained virtually all of the first generation of SAVAK personnel. In addition, CIA officials played a critical role in helping SAVAK arrest suspects in such a discreet manner that thousands of Iranian families went months without knowing about their relatives' whereabouts.

Due to Iran's close economic and political relation with the US, more than 50,000 Americans resided in Iran during the 1970's. Most Americans in Iran formed a privileged elite class; they earned six-figure, tax-free salaries and they owned luxury houses while at the same time failing to address the needs of the Iranian people, replacing Islamic laws with Western ones, forbidding traditional Islamic clothing, separation of the sexes and veiling of women (hijab). Women who resisted his ban on public hijab had their chadors forcibly removed and torn.

In the Philippines, representatives of the United States of America and of the Republic of the Philippines on July 4, 1946 signed a Treaty of General Relations between the two governments. The treaty provided for the recognition

between the two governments. The treaty provided for the recognition of the independence of the Republic of the Philippines as of July 4, 1946, and the relinquishment of American sovereignty over the Philippine Islands.⁶

The U.S. retained dozens of military bases, including a few major ones. In addition, independence was qualified by legislation passed by the U.S. Congress. For example, the Bell Trade Act provided a mechanism whereby U.S. import quotas might be established on Philippine products, which "are coming, or are likely to come, into substantial competition with like products of the United States." It further required U.S. citizens and corporations be granted equal access to Philippine minerals, forests, and other natural resources. In hearings before the Senate Committee on Finance, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs William L. Clayton described the law as "clearly inconsistent with the basic foreign economic policy of this country" and "clearly inconsistent with our promise to grant the Philippines genuine independence."

The Philippine government had little choice but to accept these terms for independence. The U.S. Congress was threatening to withhold post- World War II rebuilding funds unless the Bell Trade Act was ratified. The Philippine Congress obliged on July 2, 1946.⁷ The American hand had lain heavy on the Philippines since 1898 when 50 years of American rule began. Filipino leaders have always welcomed American influence as the blessing of a benevolent patron. As President Ramon Magsaysay said during the 1950's, "Filipinos like to see me with Americans."

Even the dictator Marcos constantly - sometimes desperately - sought American approval. And for years, though he abused human rights and, with his wife, Imelda, plundered the country of billions of dollars, the United States coddled him for the sake of its Philippine bases. As Franklin D. Roosevelt had said, justifying his support of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, "He may be an S.O.B., but he's our S.O.B."⁸

As history bears witness, both the Shah and Marcos shared the same passion for oppression, brutality, corruption and extravagance. And despite this, both were backed by the U.S. helping them to maintain control over their respective countries until they were rendered a liability to the interest of the U.S. government.

On the other hand, the peoples of Iran and the Philippines, while being oceans

apart, shared the same love for God that enabled them to face challenges in upholding their love for justice and freedom - values wired in the system of man manifesting the natural propensity to submit to God Who is the ultimate Source of these. When this love for justice and freedom was backed with faith in God, the respective revolutions unfolded.

THE PLAYING FIELD

A world order has its essential characteristic and the contemporary one, which was propelled by the Industrial Revolution, is hinged on a materialistic worldview that separates mundane and spiritual affairs setting in place a fragmented view of the world and reality that focuses on the material element, impressing upon minds that this world is the final destination as it is the only reality. This negates the principle of all religions pointing to the reality of a hereafter.

This separation of the mind and the heart is contrary to nature's design in triggering optimum awareness. Numerous experiments have demonstrated that the signals the heart continuously sends to the brain influence the function of higher brain centers involved in perception, cognition, and emotional processing.⁹ By turning off the logical function of the mind despite the signal emanating from the heart, consciousness, thus, becomes impaired. A skewed consciousness hinged on purely the material inevitably renders one vulnerable to being outwitted and manipulated. In a materially-based playing field, definitely one who controls material prowess has the upper hand.

Contrary to the view introduced by the Prophetic line that states that the creation of nations and tribes were only for identification purposes and emphasizes on the unity and brotherhood of man - with them sharing the same essence and ancestry originating from the same forefather, Prophet Adam, the contemporary worldview has deeply engrained borders that emphasize on "us" and the "other;" dividing humanity through geography, race, color, ethnicity, tribe, religion, class and whatever divisions or sectors that can be devised. This makes it a perfect feast for divide and rule strategists of advanced states coveting and controlling the resources of the world.

THE REVOLUTIONS

In 1979, the whole world was shaken with the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran spearheaded by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini that resulted to the establishment of the Islamic Republic, a form of government founded on the unity and sovereignty of God. This brought an unprecedented challenge to political pundits who were at a loss in understanding the nature of this revolution. A few years later in 1986, People Power became a popular term after the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines was toppled down through civil resistance that swept Corazon Aquino in power, a housewife turned president and one of the only three Philippine presidents to address the joint session of the United States Congress.

The Islamic Revolution was successful in gaining true independence for the country by dismantling the structures that helped maintain American control of Iran, cutting the clutches of American hegemony in that area. Although the People Power in the Philippines was successful in ousting the dictator Marcos and gave democracy some breathing space, it did not make any substantial change as far as the U.S. government's say in Philippine affairs is concerned. The new democratic president Cory Aquino, like all the other Philippine presidents, sought support and relied heavily on the Americans.

Where lies the difference, as both revolutions saw people braving guns and tanks following the dictates of their heart empowered by the love for God that manifested in a quest for justice and freedom?

Both peoples of the Philippines and Iran share a deep feeling for religiosity, with love for God strongly acting as a motivating force behind their actions, as was seen during their revolutions. Due to love for God and country (with the slogan of Democracy) the nuns together with people from all walks of life were seen at EDSA bravely facing tanks offering fully armed soldiers with flowers and rosaries.

However, the true enemies of humanity are very much aware of the strength of this power of belief and love for God. And they are also an expert in hijacking and directing this for the protection of their own interests.

Although both were products of popular revolutions, Cory Aquino was

warmly welcomed by state leaders especially from the West and even became the darling of world press. However, not only was Imam Khomeini demonised by global media, the U.S. and its allies left no stone unturned in trying to dismantle the nascent Islamic Republic, even to the point of instructing Saddam Hussain of Iraq to attack it when assassinations, coup attempts, bribery, and other covert and overt operations cannot bring it down.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD OVER THE WORLD

At the time when the world was divided into the eastern and western blocs, with states believing that the only viable option to survive was to chose between the U. S. and the U.S.S.R. to rely on, Imam Khomeini introduced the slogan "Neither east nor west, Islam is the best."¹⁰ Imam Khomeini, through the revolution he waged, emphasized on the unity of people under the sovereignty of the One Who wields real power, God. Treading the path of Prophet Muhammad who brought the complete Message, the Holy Qur'an, Imam Khomeini reminded the peoples of the world that geographical boundaries, skin color, ethnicity and differences in language were simply made by God for easier identification and never meant to be a basis for any feeling of pride and superiority. What gives distinction to man is his piety and subservience to God manifested by his compassion and service to man.

He also introduced the concept of true independence by emphasizing non-reliance on foreigners, and total belief in God and the unity of the people. This brings home the point of the uniqueness and independence of every nation and their equality despite differences in culture and material prowess. His practical approach towards everything based on the logic of "worshipping none but God, fearing none but God, and relying on none but God" inspired the people and gave them confidence that they can do something about their lot as a people.

All these fall under the umbrella of the slogan 'everyday is Ashura, every land is Karbala,'¹¹ relating to the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, Imam Hussain a.s. who was killed in the desert of Karbala on the day of Ashura after he has given everything he had in the cause of God, upholding truth, justice and freedom, epitomising love and submission to God.

Definitely, these concepts are antithetical to the interest of dominating states. The prevailing world order is sustained by presenting a fragmented worldview that renders conscious awareness dysfunctional. By presenting a lense through which to see reality, separating the heart from the mind, making a clear divide between critical thinking and love for the Creator, manipulation becomes possible since not only is the faculty of reason put in selective mode but also renders one incapable of thinking outside the box. Having a fragmented view that makes possible lip service to love for God juxtaposed with being awed with worldly power and greatness to the point of subservience to it consequently makes man vulnerable to the manipulation of ignorance. It is therefore not surprising to find people, despite having a high level of intelligence, by gobbling up whatever the West disseminates through global media, simply go through life feeling confidently free but in reality simply pawns and robots following dictates that are contrary to their nature and detrimental to their development. The heart having some blind spots, people cry to high heavens professing their worship and love for God while venerating worldly idols. This is illogical and runs counter to reason as is avowed by the complete order in the human system and the universe.

It is quite obvious then why the Islamic Revolution was not given a welcome hug by world powers since it is the only force that poses a strong and comprehensive resistance against their scheming designs. Likewise, they feared the domino effect this revolution could create. Imagine how this would serve as an inspiration to peoples around the world- considering that an aging cleric was able to rouse a nation by the power of love and subservience to God, bringing down a monarchy armed to the teeth by the U.S. government.

KARBALA: LOVE MANIFEST

So what was it that made Imam Hussain distinguishedly unique and a stand out from among all revolutionaries that not only made him the inspiration of the likes of Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela but also made the establishment of an independent Islamic Republic in this age a reality? An age where religion is relegated to mere personal matters like birth, marriage and death, but left outside the classroom, corporate board room and situation room.

We are living in a world of manifestation where our thoughts become manifest. So, at this point going back to the initial premise stating the significance of love is in order.

First, love is a powerful force that evokes commitment and attachment. As recent findings substantiate, love activates potential power within man that point to the reality that he is more than the physical body but a powerhouse of energy, the potential and capacity of which is still unfathomable given limitations in equipment that must be utilized for its thorough scientific observation. Nevertheless, achievements made in science and technology that give modern man an edge over those of goneby eras clearly manifest this. Man has reached this stage of material advancement due to his creativity being unleashed by the power of his love for knowledge and understanding.

Since man is made up of a body and a soul, a continuous tug of war ensues between the animal instinct which is directed towards the love of this world and everything confined to this world - name, position, class, lineage, family, property, wealth, preservation of the material element and fear for its destruction; and the divine instinct which is directed towards love of the metaphysical aspects such as truth, justice, freedom, courage, honor, dignity, beauty, etc., going through the different layers seeking the highest level of perfection which is God.

Second, you cannot love without knowing. Definitely, you cannot love someone or anything that you do not know. Thus, you can only love God if you know Him and is, thus, not smitten with this world. If one's awareness is only focused on this world then it is but logical that it will be the only object of his love. Imam Hussain loved God because he consciously knew God. He was in love with Him because he (Imam Hussain) realized that He was the only one worthy of total love and devotion being the Perfect Source of all beauty, goodness and power; and whose love and compassion knew no bounds. Imam Hussain was deeply infatuated with Him. He was consciously aware of Him all the time. He thought of Him all the time, at every place and at all times, as he lived his day to day life among people.

Third, there is a saying that goes, "you can give without loving but you can not love without giving."¹² Because of his love for God, Imam Hussain turned his back on

what people relentlessly pursue in life. Generally speaking, day in day out, people focus and work to death just to get the best comfort this world could offer - the highest position, the fat wallet, the dream car, the best food, the unforgettable vacation, the perfect retirement package, and even the picture-perfect interment site. Imam Hussain turned his back on what was offered to him in exchange for his allegiance - all the perks and privileges, all the comfort and good life that come with position that may be unimaginable for the man on the street. Not only did Imam Hussain turn his back on all the comfort and good life to prove his love for God, he even gave all that he had - his 6-month old baby, his children, family, and friends. Standing alone wounded in the middle of thousands of fully armed men meaning to kill him, he even cried to his Lord that had he had more, he would have gladly given them all too. Left with nothing, Imam Hussain, with all his love and devotion, gave his life to his Beloved.

Through Imam Hussain, the Islamic Revolution in Iran gave the people new awareness that motivated them to action. A totally new perspective was introduced that gave a new definition of success. Success was not just equated with bank accounts or position or comfortable life. Success is when the soul is purified from attachments and confinements of the material realm enabling it to acknowledge and submit to an Almighty Divine Being; and this is manifested when priorities are set for the love for truth and justice above all, and when one is no longer awed and smitten by this world. This in no way suggests that love for God means abandoning this world and not striving to get the best of what it offers. Rather, it means working to get the best in this world but not at the expense of truth and justice that translates to losing one's soul and the next world. It means working within the parameters set by God while striving to make life in this world better which is nothing but a means of approach to the Ultimate Being. This is because this world is not the end but only a means to pleasing God who wants the best of both worlds for man. This understanding of life, death and success thereby gave the supporters of Imam Khomeini the drive to face hurdles even to the point of being killed while defending their right to live and have control over their land, which for them was a trust from God.

As the Islamic Revolution is the revolution of the Prophets addressing every human heart that intrinsically abhors living a life of humiliation being oppressed and tyrannized, the preserver of the Prophetic Line, Imam Hussain, addressed all human beings by saying, "if you do not believe in God, at least be free for the sake of your humanity."

BREAKING FREE

Real change in society requires the change of heart and mindset of the people. As the Holy Qur'an posits, "God will not change the condition of the people unless they change what is in their hearts." It is a change from prioritizing love of this world to love of God. Contrary to the conventional view that having God in the equation is undoable and spells failure, pursuing worldly matters within the parameters set by God actually shortens the route to success by preventing problems and concerns that arise from a narrow and limited perspective.

Islamic Revolution is a reformation of the individual self that radiates in the society. With a powerful yet merciful God as the focal point of man's consciousness, man is not only given the chance to reinvent himself at any juncture in his life but his horizon also widens as limitations from within the material realm dissipate. The mind, upon internalization of the sovereignty of God, is no longer cowered by worldly powers. Islamic Revolution requires people reforming themselves, attuning their lives to the program of God, which encompasses all aspects of human life entrenched with built-in safety nets to assure man's ascent. And with the establishment of an Islamic Republic loyal to this revolution, changes in policies on economy and politics become inevitable, two aspects generally outside the scope of religion at this time.

The Islamic Revolution in this era, spearheaded by an Iranian in the personality of the late Imam Khomeini, although happened in Iran, was never meant to be confined within the geographical boundaries of Iran nor was it meant to attract only a certain class or sector of the society.

Setting boundaries is antithetical to the principles of Islamic Revolution as it is a movement that calls on every willing human being in this planet, whether Muslim, Jew, Christian, Buddhist, atheist, any thinking man with a heart, coming from whatever class or sector of society at that.

To confine it to any border is opposed to its essence as this is the same

revolution waged by all the 124,000 Prophets who existed in this planet at different places and time, starting from Adam and among them Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and including the last, Muhammad. They all brought the same Message: belief in One God, and shared the same objective: deliver man from subservience to man to subservience to God alone.

The Islamic Revolution awakens the alienated man and presents a program with implements and methodology so he can work for the actualization of his potential, the apex of which is realized when he ultimately gains nearness with the Perfect Source, God. It redirects man's focus by reminding man that he is not the body destined for this material world but a divine spark, a soul, temporarily lodged in a body heading toward its completion which is beyond man's comprehension and imagination.

CONCLUSION

The pursuit of perfection is innate in man as best manifested in his unrelenting efforts and struggles to achieve the best, practically, in all his endeavors. This is collectively manifested in a revolution. As man's evolution goes through stages, so do revolutions. History is there to bear witness to this fact as humanity's timeline has been decked with revolutions.

However, what differentiates one revolution from another is its goal, its vision of what is the best or the apex of perfection.

The Islamic Revolution of Iran stands distinct from all other known revolutions in the contemporary time. It is a movement for the transformation of individuals that is translated to structural reforms in the society. It is a movement that lays emphasis on the soul and geared towards satisfying its longings, widening man's horizon for development. By introducing a Divine Reality that is not constricted nor akin to anything that can be confined within man's mind, man's consciousness is steered towards frontiers beyond the universe, thus, freeing it to soar high, higher and higher. This is made doable through a system introduced by God which is abreast with the changing times, and entrenched with mechanisms to

jumpstart, sustain and see it through the end.

As the Islamic Republic of Iran stays in the global political landscape, space age man is reminded that love for God and subservience to Him do not in any way hinder man's progress and development but in fact accelerates it exponentially.

What about the People Power Revolution in the Philippines? Although much credit is given to the participation of the people in toppling down the Marcos dictatorship and giving democracy its much needed space in Philippine politics, much is to be desired as far as substantial change in the system is concerned. For one, American control is still very much deep in the Philippine setting as American interest is still the priority in the economic and political policies of the Philippine government. Despite changes in presidents, there has been no substantial change yet as whoever resides in Malacanang Palace is still very much beholden to the U.S. government and still seeks its support and backing.

Definitely, revolution goes through stages and takes time. As long as people are willing to think critically, to ask questions and think outside the box, and their fear of loss and destruction is superseded by their love for God manifested in love for truth and justice, then there is much hope for this divine spark to shine brightly in the end.

And true to the observance today of close relations between the Philippines and Iran, the Islamic Revolution in Iran which has Karbala at its bedrock need not be alien to the Filipinos.

The National Hero, Dr. Jose Rizal said, "Ang taong hindi marunong lumingon sa kanyang pinanggalingan ay hindi makakarating sa kanyang patutunguhan" ("A person who does not look to his past will not reach his destination"). What is essential, therefore, is a review of the past. What Filipinos need to do is only to take heed of this remarkable advice and go even further beyond the revolutions waged by their valiant forefathers Bonifacio and Rizal when looking for inspiration. For hidden in the annals of Philippine history lies Padang Karbala, the scene of a fierce battle between the invading American forces and the Moros, the ancestors of present day Filipinos.

The Moros took to heart the lesson they learned from Hussain who taught man that life in humiliation under an oppressive system is death and death fighting against injustice is life. They understood well Imam Hussain's

instructions on how to live with dignity by choosing the perfect death.

Thus, following the footsteps of Imam Hussain, the Moros in Padang Karbala in the province of Lanao in the southern island of Mindanao, numbering 700, with utmost fidelity to their pledge of love for God manifested in their upholding truth, justice and freedom, looked death in the eye and bravely faced the Americans, until one by one they fell on the ground, defying and finally defeating their baser instinct to surrender and preserve their physical body from destruction.

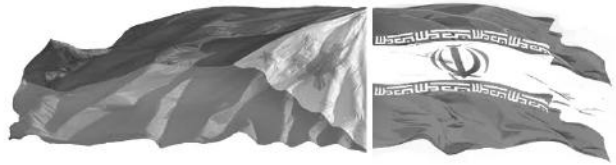
The Moros who preferred to die instead of paying allegiance to Spain and the Americans emulated Imam Hussain who understood well that living in submission to other than God is contrary to man's nature. They chose to die to keep their souls alive - for bowing to oppressors and tyrants for fear of losing one's family, property or life is dehumanizing and very harmful to the well-being of the soul. Likewise, indifference to others suffering under the hands of oppressors, for fear of a backlash is outright opposite to being human.

This is because being subservient to man and this world is opposed to the dictates of the heart and ruins man's chance to realize and actualize his potential. For the heart, in its pristine state, acknowledges the truth that there is only one true Beloved, the Compassionate and Merciful God who made it. Likewise, a mere focus on this world is illogical too as was taught by Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) who said, "This world is only a bridge, and no wise man builds his house on a bridge."

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PERCEPTIONS ON IRAN AND IRANIANS IN THE PHILIPPINE MEDIA

Emmeviene Suelto

Asian Center, University of the Philippines

ABSTRACT

Representations of ethnicity and culture in media and popular culture play an important role in the way we understand and interact with other people. The Philippines and Iran established formal diplomatic ties in 1974. However, the advent of the 1979 Islamic Revolution affected the political and economic relationship between the two nations. The Philippines, saddled with its own Muslim insurgency and pressured by U.S. sanctions, tried to maintain a delicate balance in its relationship with Iran without antagonizing its "special relationship" with the U.S. that created a certain wariness on both sides.

Today, the growing presence of Iranian students as well as the proliferation of Filipino-Iranians in the media as athletes, celebrities and intellectuals has somehow shifted the way Filipinos view Iran and Iranians.

This paper will examine how Iran and Iranians are currently perceived in Filipino writings by studying how the Filipino media represents them in news articles.

Representation of Iran and Iranians among Filipinos are essential to the understanding and cooperation among the two nations and has important implications not only in the conduct of our country's foreign relations but also in the quality of interaction among Iranian and Filipino people.

KEYWORDS: Representation, Print Media, Iran, Iranians

INTRODUCTION

Perception is defined as our ability to think about or understand something or someone. One's perception about something, whether material or conceptual, can influence one's actions or behavior towards it. However, our perceptions may not reflect actual reality. Factors like our environment, our upbringing, our experiences, our own beliefs and principles, our historical context, etc. can influence the way we view certain things. In addition, perception is also dynamic and can change over time, either towards a positive or negative direction.

Media is a powerful tool that can be used to shape people's perceptions of reality through the way it represents certain groups of people, events, issues and ideas.

Walter Lippman, a journalist and political commentator, first introduced the theory of the agenda-setting function of media, whereby news media determines the public's perception and opinion through its use of images.¹

The media's own perception of what is reality could either be accurate or distorted depending on various factors such as the goals of the corporations that control it, what ideas the dominant powers in the society it operates wants to convey as well as the demands of its public audience.

In democratic countries like the Philippines, where the media is often viewed as the "fourth estate," it plays a powerful role in determining public perception and persuading public opinion.

The way certain nationalities, races or ethnicities are portrayed in the media can influence how we, the public, view, understand and interact with them.

Stuart Hall, the eminent cultural theorist, described representation as "the production of the meaning of concepts in our minds through language."² He adds, "It is by our use of things, and what we say, think and feel about them - how we represent them - that we give them a meaning."³

Constant repetition of this representation of certain images in the media can create stereotypes and reinforce perceptions, whether they are accurate or not.

This paper will examine how Filipinos currently perceive Iran and Iranians by looking at how the Philippine media, specifically print media, represents them in newspaper articles.

Fifteen newspaper articles pertaining to Iran and Iranians that were published both in the print and web editions of two major Filipino broadsheets, Philippine Daily Inquirer and The Philippine Star, during the 2014 Asian Games, which ran from September 19 to October 4, 2014, were used for this study.

This paper will look at whether the newspaper articles portrayed Iran and Iranians in either a favorable, unfavorable or neutral light during this period. It will also look into the attributes and descriptions that the news articles used to associate with Iran and Iranians.

Representations of Iran and Iranians by the Filipino media are essential to the understanding and cooperation between these two countries and have important implications not only in the conduct of our country's foreign relations but also in how ordinary Filipinos and Iranians interact with each other.

This is particularly important, as the number of Iranian students has steadily grown over the past years due to low-cost educational opportunities in the country. Therefore, interactions between Filipinos and Iranians are becoming common, which sometimes lead to misunderstanding and conflict.

In 2012, GMA News ran a story regarding a complaint by a group of over 100 Iranian students that accused officials of the Manila Central University (MCU) of "oppressive practices and discriminatory acts" including labeling them as "terrorists" and "terrorist supporters."⁴

In 2013, the Philippine basketball team's loss to Iran during the FIBA World Cup resulted in a barrage of negative comments by disgruntled Filipino fans on various social media sites, which marred the over-all perceptions of both nationalities. This prompted some Filipino bloggers and netizens to call out their fellow countrymen over the racist undertones of their comments. Online media outlets like Rappler published articles discussing the issue of race and ethnicity in today's Philippine society because of it.⁵

In order to gain a better understanding and promote greater tolerance among Filipinos and Iranians, we need to be aware of the media's representations of certain groups of people so that we can evaluate whether the perceptions that we have of others are real and accurate.

BACKGROUND OF PHILIPPINE-IRAN RELATIONS

Philippine and Iran relations have seen both highs and lows in the past decades. The early 60s and 70s saw an intensification of relations with the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries in January 1964 and the visit of former First Lady Imelda Marcos during the 2,500th anniversary of the Persian Empire in October 1971.⁶

However, the late 70s and early 80s also saw one the lowest point in Philippine-Iran relations, which was brought about by the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the subsequent protests and clashes between the anti-Shah and the pro-Shah Iranian student groups in Manila.⁷ These violent street conflicts as well as the new Iranian government's sympathy and support for the aspirations of the Muslim separatist group, MNLF, prompted then-President Ferdinand Marcos to ban all demonstrations by foreigners, deported those who participated in these protests and tightened the influx of Iranian students in the country.⁸

Saddled with a growing Muslim separatist movement and pressured by U.S. sanctions, the Philippines tried to maintain a delicate balance in its relations with Iran without antagonizing its "special relationship" with the U.S.

Bilateral ties between the two countries saw improvement in 2003 when the Philippines and Iran held a bilateral conference to encourage cultural and economic cooperation among them.⁹

This was followed by a series of MOUs and trade agreements, beginning with the 2004 economic accords regarding cooperation in energy and petroleum products.¹⁰ Iran's \$100 million investment in the Philippine petrochemical market in 2005¹¹ and a 2010 MOU on recognizing Filipino seafarer's competencies certificates quickly followed this.¹²

Today, the growing presence of Iranian students, who comprise the 3rd largest foreign student population in the country,¹³ as well as the proliferation of Filipino-Iranians in Philippine media as intellectuals, athletes, and celebrities have made an impact on how Iran and Iranians are perceived by Filipinos. Whether this impact is heading towards a positive or negative direction remains to be seen.

REPRESENTATION AND THE MEDIA

As mentioned previously, Hall sees representation as "constitutive" to giving things meaning. For him, representation is part or a condition to existence. The words we use to attach to certain things, the images we use to portray them, the emotions we associate with them, the way we classify them and the values we place on them - all have a bearing in creating the meaning of things.¹⁴

The way something or someone is represented in the media can define this particular thing or person to the audience, in a way, influencing the meanings that are given or attached to them.

Hall also pointed out that the meanings that we "read" from the representation are not fixed. There are many interpretations of what the meaning is and this varies from one context to another.¹⁵

We can relate this to how Philippine media perceived and portrayed Iran and Iranians before and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Before the revolution, Iran was represented in Philippine media as a wealthy, exotic place, rich in thousands of years of history and culture and the Iranian people as sophisticated, glamorous, Westernized and modern people. An example of this particular representation of Iran can be seen in the documentary of the former First Lady Imelda Marcos' visit to the country in 1971 on the occasion of the 2,500th founding of the Persian Empire.¹⁶

After the revolution, the media representation of Iran in the Philippines changed. It was depicted as an Islamic theocracy supportive of the Filipino-Muslims' self-determination struggle¹⁷ while Iranian students, who were locked in a fierce pro-Shah and anti-Shah rivalry were seen as violent, disturbing the peace and security as well as inciting their Filipino friends to join their cause.¹⁸

The meanings attached to the representation of Iran and Iranians during that period is only just one interpretation. As Hall reminds us, meanings are not fixed and are dependent on cultural and historical context.

However, one way that humans make sense of the world, especially if it is something that is unfamiliar and foreign to our consciousness, is to create fixed meanings to things, persons, situations, events, etc. This is where power and ideology

comes in. Hall says that "the purpose of power, when it intervenes in language, is precisely to absolutely fix." It tries to "close language, to close meaning, to stop the flow" so that there will be no other interpretations.¹⁹

This results in the creation of stereotypes. Since it is impossible to have knowledge or experience about all the meanings that can be interpreted in our world, we tend to use stereotyping to infer certain characteristics about groups of people in order to understand and make sense of our environment.

However, the problem with this is we tend to lump people into categories, create generalizations, which could become at some point absolutes that would define an entire people or region into a limited set of characteristics. The labels that we use do not provide an accurate representation since people, things, events, etc. are dynamic and change through time as Hall pointed out.

These labels/stereotypes are perpetuated by the dominant powers and ideology in a society. They have the capacity to essentially disseminate particular meanings for certain things and influence the representation and consequently the perception of people, things, events, issues, etc. Even if these stereotypes and labels are not accurate, they can easily force/pressure/ persuade other people to acquiesce to their perspective.

The stereotype eventually becomes ingrained in the minds of people that it is seen as naturally occurring, even intrinsic to the being of a person or thing.

Media is a powerful medium of communication, which can transmit or circulate these stereotypes or meanings to a large audience across vast areas of the world. Knowing who or what ideology controls the media, what channels are used, which meanings are transmitted to whom, allows one to have a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the meanings that these representations depict.

METHODOLOGY

As mentioned previously, this paper examined the text content of fifteen news articles published in both print and web editions from Philippine Daily Inquirer and The Philippine Star about Iran and Iranians during the 2014 Asian Games using content analysis.

The news articles chosen for the study were not limited to sports-related topics that refer to Iranians. However, because of the timeframe used in the selection of articles, majority of them are sports related.

It should also be noted that the articles chosen for this study did not include news wire stories (Agence France-Presse, Reuters, Associated Press, etc.), which are the main sources that Philippine newspapers normally use when it comes to topics that refer to external/foreign issues and events. This is to ensure that findings were truly from a Filipino perspective.

This paper used three categories to measure the perception of Iran and Iranians in the newspaper articles. They are: Favorable, Unfavorable and Neutral.

The criteria used to categorize whether an article fell into the Favorable category was if it portrayed Iran and Iranians in a fully positive way in both its manifest (its visible and surface meaning) and latent (underlying meaning) content.

While news stories that represented Iran and Iranians in a fully negative manner in both manifest and latent content was categorized as Unfavorable.

Articles that neither portrayed Iran and Iranians in a fully positive or fully negative light was categorized as Neutral.

With regards to the attributes of Iran and Iranians that were used in the news articles, this paper used the number of times a certain attribute or references to a certain attribute appeared or was implied in the text as an indicator.

FINDINGS

Although the articles used for this study was not limited to sports-related stories, 14 out of the 15 stories that were published during the September 19 to October 4, 2014 period that referred to Iran and Iranians and were written by Filipino journalists are about sports. There was only 1 article about Iran and Iranians that was located in the national news section.

TABLE I: Location of Articles

Broadsheet	Front Page	National News	Sports News	World News	Business	Entertainment	Total
Philippine Daily Inquirer	0	1	3	-	0	0	4
Philippine Star	0	0	11	-	0	0	11
Total	0	1	14	-	0	0	15

Out of the fifteen newspaper articles that were analyzed in this study, 7 of them portrayed Iran and Iranians in a Favorable manner while 4 articles portrayed Iran and Iranians in an Unfavorable manner. There were also 4 articles that portrayed Iran and Iranians in a Neutral manner.

TABLE II: Philippine Media Perception of Iran and Iranians

Broadsheet	Favorable	Unfavorable	Neutral	Total
Philippine Daily Inquirer	2	1	1	4
Philippine Star	5	3	3	11
Total	7	4	4	15

Attributes that were commonly associated with Iran and Iranians, either explicitly or implicitly, were about references to the Iranian team's undefeated status, the Iranian players' height and sports abilities and other perceived negative traits.

TABLE III: Attributes Associated with Iran and Iranians

ITEM NO.	ATTRIBUTES	NO. OF TIMES REFERRED
1	Iran basketball team is unbeatable	25
2	Iranians are good basketball players	15
3	Iranians are tall	13
4	Iranians are arrogant	6
5	Iran's basketball team is strong	5
6	Iranians do not play fair	5
7	Iran is possibly in cahoots with ISIS	1
8	Iranians are liars	1

TABLE IV: Positive & Negative Attributes Associated with Iran and Iranians

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Iran basketball team is unbeatable	Iranians are arrogant (mayabang)
Iranians are good basketball players	Iranians do not play fair
Iranians are tall	Iran is possibly in cahoots with ISIS
Iran's basketball team is strong	Iranians are liars

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, majority of the stories about Iran and Iranians during the period studied are sports-related. One interpretation for this could be that the timeframe used in this study coincided with the timeframe of the 2014 Asian Games so it was inevitable that many of the stories regarding Iran and Iranians are about sports.

This doesn't mean, however, that there were no other stories aside from sports. There were actually seven stories pertaining to Iran and Iranians during this period. However, these were not used in the study because they were from news wires/agencies and had a Western perspective to it.

Although the stories were not included, this tells us something about the way Philippine media sees Iran and Iranians especially they generally subscribe to the Western point-of-view not only when it comes to that particular country and people but generally foreign news, a bulk of which are from international news wires. This tells a lot about what power or ideology influences the Philippine media's perspective and subsequent representations of world news.

In addition, the fact that there was only one story about Iran and Iranians in the local news during this period also tells something about the majority of Philippine-Iran interaction that is worth representing or publishing. Sports, specifically basketball, is the main arena that Philippines and Iran encounter each other. Although it is certainly not the only arena in Philippine-Iran relations, it is here that the Filipino public can relate to Iran and Iranians. It is here that the meaning of Iran and Iranians through its representation is constructed in relation to the Philippines and being a Filipino. Because of this, sports can be an important tool to foster better understanding between Philippines and Iran.

The findings of the study show that Philippine print media represent Iran and Iranians in a generally Favorable manner. However, it is important to note that 4 out of 15 articles still portray Iran and Iranians in an Unfavorable light while the same number also depict them in a Neutral manner.

This can be interpreted in many ways. One is that Filipino perception of Iran and Iranians have improved since the 1979 Revolution towards a more positive

direction. This may be due to many factors such as the presence of a large Iranian community in the country, proliferation of Filipino- Iranians in Philippine media and public life but most of all because of the interaction between the two countries in basketball.

However, the Unfavorable sentiments towards Iran and Iranians could also be attributed to Philippine-Iran interaction in basketball. As mentioned previously, basketball is one arena, where Filipinos can construct their perception of Iran and Iranians in relation to themselves and this includes both positive and negative perceptions.

In the Philippines, basketball is the national sport despite its people not being built for it. There is a saying in Filipino that goes, "*Matalo lang sa lahat, huwag lang sa basketball.*" This can be roughly translated as: It doesn't matter if we lose in all other forms of competition, just not in basketball. This indicates the level of passion that basketball has among Filipinos, which can affect the way Iran and Iranians are viewed and represented in Philippine media.

With regards to the attributes associated with Iran and Iranians, the study finds that there is a balance, in some sense, in the representation of traits and characteristics ascribed to Iran and Iranians. Both positive and negative attributes are shown.

There is, however, more mention of the positive attributes especially under the theme of Iran's basketball team being unbeatable. The constant mention of Iran's strong track record in this field and the fact that the Philippine team has beaten them only once in eight meetings is one indication that Philippine media portrays Iran as the team to beat - the elusive goal that Filipinos have been trying to reach for decades. It also shows that there is a sense of urgency to try to beat Iran in basketball underneath its seemingly positive representation.

The Philippines' need to be better than Iran in basketball can be "read" in a larger context of the Philippines being a developing country has struggled economically for decades compared to Iran, an oil-rich country, which has survived and thrived despite U.S. sanctions. There is a "David and Goliath" discourse underlying the way Iran and Iranians are represented in Philippine media. The Philippine public can relate to this especially since the

characteristics of Iranian players such as height and basketball abilities are something that our Philippine team and by extension the general Philippine public constantly struggle with and aspire to.

One of the most represented negative attributes associated with Iran and Iranians that the study saw is Iranian's seeming arrogance or *yabang* in Filipino slang. This term can also be interpreted positively as confidence in one's abilities. However, in Philippine context, Filipinos have a penchant for the underdog because they can easily relate to them. Manny Pacquiao, the celebrated Filipino boxer, is a primary example of this partiality for the underprivileged, with his rags-to-riches story and his ability to fell opponents twice his size through his swift, lightning moves and his dogged persistence.

The Iranian's confidence in their abilities was represented and perceived as arrogance. A quote by Samad Nikkah Bahrami that appeared in Tehran Times making a bold guarantee that the Iranian basketball will win gold in the 2014 Asian Games was repeated three times in three different articles in the sample of newspaper article examined.²⁰

The perception of Filipinos to this was summed up perfectly by the Philippine team's Marc Pingris when he replied in jest that Bahrami was lying and was being arrogant just because the Iranian team had the 7-footer Hamed Haddadi.²¹

Another negative attribute that also came out of the study, although very minimally, was Iran's supposed connection to terrorist organizations like ISIS, allegedly based on a confidential Department of Foreign Affairs memo. Iranian Ambassador Ali Asghar has vehemently denied this and Philippine officials have assured him that the report was "ridiculous." He has lamented that reports like this taint the image of Iran in the country.²²

This particular representation of Iran in Philippine media shows that despite improving relations between the two countries, there is still this wariness in the Filipino media's perception of Iran. This could be interpreted as a sort of "historical hangover" from the 1979 Islamic revolution and the consequent turmoil seen in the streets of Manila during that time as well as Iran's previous support to the Bangsamoro cause.

However, another interpretation for this is the presence of certain

dominant powers or ideology that affects how Iran and Iranians are being portrayed in Philippine media. Western influence, particularly the U.S., is undeniably strong in the country. The fact that Philippine newspapers source foreign news from Western news wires is a clear indication of the kind of worldview that Philippine media subscribes to.

As mentioned previously, the constant representation of certain limited characteristics associated with Iran and Iranians has the worrying possibility of creating stereotypes in the minds of the Filipinos. Instead of fostering harmonious relations with the two countries, it could create biases and misunderstandings among the people.

Knowing who produces these representations, where they come from, what attributes are being represented and who the intended audience is are just some of the questions that we need to be aware of and examine if we want to challenge the stereotypes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

As Hall said, the way we perceive and make meaning of things is linked to the way things are represented. Media's role in circulating representations means that it has the ability to "set the agenda" on the public's perception of what the meaning of things should be. Because of this, the media plays a vital role in developing Philippine-Iran relations towards a more positive direction.

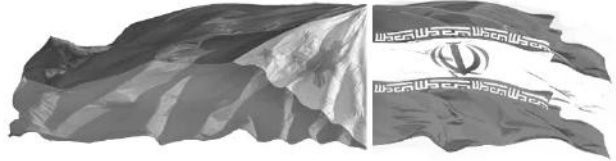
The scope of this study was quite limited and may not accurately represent the perception of the whole Filipino print media industry. Further studies could be done with a bigger sample size in terms of time frame and the number of newspapers examined. This type of study can also be applied Filipino broadcast media especially since they have a wider audience reach than print and web editions.

A comparison of media's representation of Iran and Iranians and the Filipino public's perception of them is also another way to get a more accurate measure of the media's ability to shaping perception.

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PHILIPPINE-IRAN RELATIONS: Forging a Stronger Partnership in the Asian Century

Javad F. Heydarian

Assistant Professor, Political Science, De La Salle University

ABSTRACT

As the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran celebrate their fifth decade of bilateral relations, the paper looks at the ebbs and flows of the overall state of strategic and economic relations between the two Asian countries since the mid-19th century, the beginning of the process of decolonization in the Global South. The paper looks at the similarities in the collective struggles of the two nations, which have been among the first countries in the global periphery to have fought for self-determination and the establishment of a parliamentary democracy. While the Philippines, beginning in the Commonwealth period (1935-1946), laid down the institutional foundations of liberal democracy, the Iranian people, in turn, elected the first democratic government in West Asia under the Mossadeqh administration (1951-1953).

As beacons of popular sovereignty and national self-determination, both the Philippines and Iran inspired similar struggles across the Global South. The paper also looks at the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the 1986 EDSA Revolution, two seismic upheavals, which shook the foundations of autocratic governments in the Islamic world and the developing world, respectively. While the 1979 Iranian Revolution inspired grassroots popular mobilization by religious and democratic forces across the Middle East and beyond, the 1986 EDSA "People's Power" Revolution inspired similar non-violent protests overseas, culminating in the downfall of dictatorships in, among others, South Korea, Taiwan, and the demise of Communist

regimes in Central-Eastern Europe in 1989. Both countries were responsible for world-historical events, which redefined the contours of the emerging post-Cold War order.

Lastly, the paper looks at Philippine-Iran relations in the post-Cold War period, and how multiple conflicts/crises in the Middle East as well as economic globalization and the drive for greater economic integration have affected and shaped the trajectory of bilateral relations. As the Philippines emerges as Asia's new tiger economy, and Iran, under the Rouhani administration, re-calibrates its relations with the West and the broader international community, the paper argues that there is an unprecedented opportunity and impetus for closer bilateral cooperation, investment, and trade in the coming years. The Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran could emerge as the leading forces of change and influence in the Asian century.

KEY WORDS: Revolution, National Independence and Self-Determination, Asian Century, Philippine-Iran relations

INTRODUCTION

As we celebrate the fifth decade of friendship between the two countries, it is important to put things into perspective - both from a broader historical point of view, looking into the evolution of bilateral relations overtime, as well as the emerging horizons of possibilities for the two Asian countries in the coming decades. Today, there are few people, who are aware of the fact that the Philippines and Iran (historically known as Persia) were among the two first parliamentary democracies in Asia, situated on the far corners of the Eurasian landscape.

Iran is not only a widely-acknowledged cradle of civilization - home to more than 7,000 years of documented (based on cutting-edge archeological studies) human history, and the site of the first world empire, under the Achaemenid dynasty (550- 330 B.C.) - but it is also the *cradle of democracy* in the Middle East. The Mohammad Mosaddegh administration (1951-53) was the first democratically elected government in West Asia - and the broader Islamic world. Mosaddegh

was not only a highly charismatic and beloved leader at home; he was, in many ways, the forefather of *Thirdworldism* and the *non-aligned movement*- an ideology that would later be crystallized under the leadership and collective vision of Sukarno (Indonesia), Nasser (Egypt), Nehru (India), and Tito (Yugoslavia) in the first decade of the Cold War. He repeatedly, during his short tenure in office, outmaneuvered colonial powers through the force of his logic and the moral depth of his rhetoric, especially during his speech in the United Nations, as he fought for Iran's self-determination against the imperial designs of foreign powers. He was a world-historical figure who mobilized the Iranian nation in a world-historical struggle for national independence (Kinzer, 2003; Mishra, 2012). As notable Indian author Pankaj Mishra, author of *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (2013), aptly describes "The Patriot of Persia":

Asian intellectuals and activists had begun to challenge the arbitrary power of Western imperialists and their native allies in the late 19th century. The first generation contained polemicists like al-Afghani, who gathered energetic but disorganised young anti-imperialists around him in Kabul, Istanbul, Cairo and Tehran. The next generation produced men like Mossadegh, who...were better equipped to provide their increasingly restless compatriots with a coherent ideology and politics of anticolonial nationalism.

It was a battle for ensuring the Iranian people benefited from the natural riches of their motherland. Mosaddeq's - and the Iranian peoples' - courageous exploits inspired a whole generation of leaders across the Middle East and beyond to take up the cudgels for national self-determination - namely, to demand ownership over their own natural resources - over the succeeding decades. The 1979 Iranian Revolution was a culmination and continuation of earlier efforts by the Iranian nation to re-assert its national independence, once again inspiring similar popular movements across the region and beyond. As the eminent French philosopher Michel Foucault (1979) memorably observed, the Iranian Revolution perhaps represented the "first great insurrection against global systems" - it was a

rejection of neo-colonialism and the perpetuation of lopsided relations between the Global South and the Industrialized World.

The Philippines, in turn, has for long served as a bastion of liberal democracy in a region that has been distinguished for its unique combination of autocratic governance and extractive economic modernization. Democracy has been embedded in the national psyche of the Filipino people. Consensus-based decision-making and freedom of conscience are the pillars of the Filipino body-politic. And when the Marcos dictatorship sought to abolish the country's long legacy of liberal democratic institutions, it faced decades of resistance from all corners - across the ideological spectrum - of the society.

And it took the valiant struggles of people like Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, who sacrificed his life for the freedom of his country, memorably saying "the Filipino [people] is worth dying for," to mobilize a nation against dictatorship and economic stagnation. It all culminated in the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution, which saw the bloodless downfall of a dictator. This was another world-historical event, which inspired similar uprisings across East Asia, from South Korea and Taiwan, all the way to Latin America and Eastern Europe, reaching its apogee in the 1989 collapse of the Iron Curtain in Europe.

FORGING A PROMISING FUTURE

In many ways, the national narratives - and the collective struggles - of both the Philippines and Iran reflect a common desire for popular sovereignty and national self-determination. Despite all their cultural and religious differences, the two Asian countries converge on those foundational principles, which have fuelled the spirit of the Iranian and Filipino nations alike. But one must also note how the ebbs and flows of Philippine-Iran relations, however, have also been determined by the evolving priorities of their respective governments and the shifting geopolitical sands in recent decades.

The issue, however, shouldn't necessarily be about foregone opportunities and/or deficiencies in bilateral ties. For sure, there is a lot of room for greater cooperation between the two countries, especially in the realm of energy trade, investments,

and agricultural. Both the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran represent among the biggest economies in Asia. They are both extremely promising emerging markets, which could redefine the contours of the international order in the coming decades.

By the middle of this century, both Iran and the Philippines are expected to, as many leading economists and financial institutions have repeatedly suggested, feature among the most consequential markets and engines of growth in the world, especially as the poles of global power shift from the West to the East, with the Asian economies of China, India, South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Bangladesh emerging as new growth poles -and transforming the international economic hierarchy. The Asia-Pacific region has become the engine of global growth and economic dynamism in the 21st century (Mahbubani, 2012; Zakaria 2008).

Figure 1 shows O'Neill et al. (2005) forecast of how the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) size of the so-called "Next Eleven" group of promising emerging markets, which includes Iran and the Philippines, by the end of the first quarter and first half of this century. Figure 2 shows the overall economic potential, the Growth Environment Score (GES) of Iran and the Philippines among major emerging markets. The GES is based on a quantitative assessment of the following factors:

1. Macroeconomic stability, measuring inflation, government deficit, and external debt;
2. Macroeconomic conditions, based on investment rates, openness of the economy, and technological capabilities, penetration of PCs; phones; internet;
4. Human capital, based on educational indicators and life expectancy
5. Political conditions, based on political stability, rule of law, and corruption indicators

Clearly, both Iran and the Philippines, based on the GES, represent highly promising economies.

PROMISING NATIONS

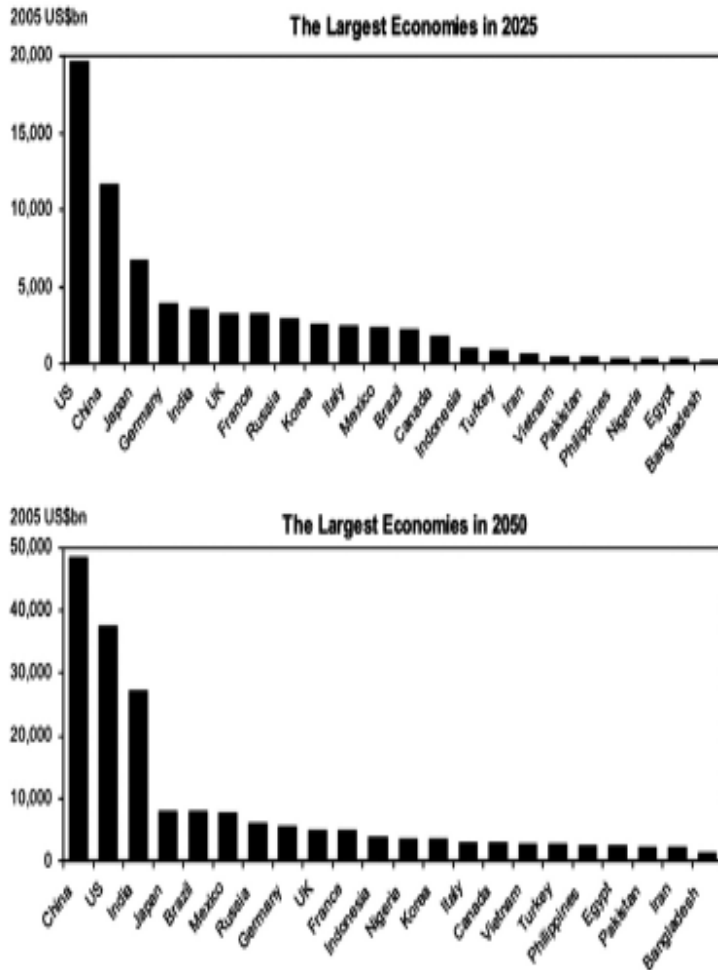
While Iran is home to one of the world's biggest hydrocarbon reserves, the Philippines has recently emerged as one of the world's fastest growing economies. Both countries are home to one of the most talented peoples, reflecting the vigor of the educational institutions. Obviously, there is a synergistic potential for stronger energy ties between the two countries, since energy-rich Iran represents as a perfect partner for energy-hungry and booming Philippines. And there growing hopes for a brighter future for both countries and their bilateral ties, especially as the Rouhani administration in Iran explores the possibility for a new chapter in Iran's relations with the rest of the world, including the West.

For the past year and a half, global powers and Tehran have vigorously explored avenues for cooperation and mutual confidence building, especially in the realm of nuclear proliferation and, increasingly in recent months, over regional security issues in the Middle East. For many Western observers, Iran (under the Rouhani administration) represents a bastion of moderation and stability in a region filled with conflict and extremism.

Ultimately, the world could witness the establishment of a new regional security architecture, where Iran and other regional players could collectively contribute to conflict-resolution, regional integration, and peace building.

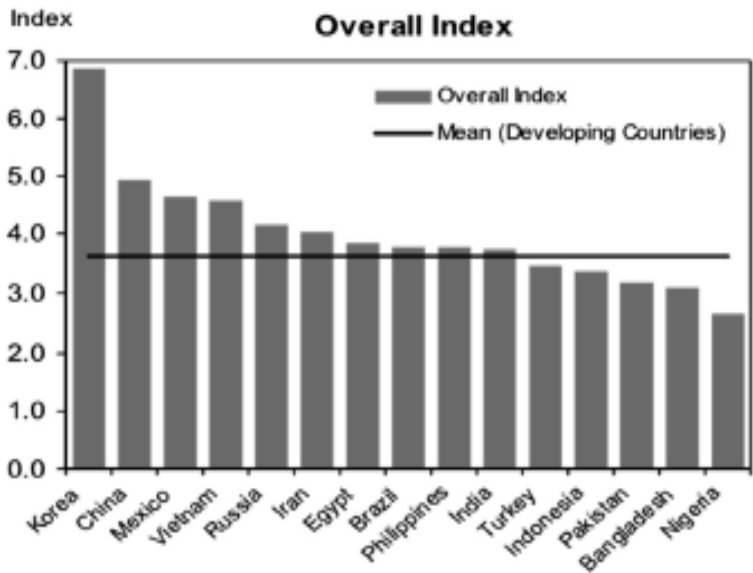
The 2013 election of President Hassan Rouhani paved the way for the establishment of a centrist, diplomatically-savvy administration. Rouhani's cabinet stood as among the most technocratic in the world, boasting more American PhD-holders than the White House. Staking his legacy on ending Iran's economic woes, Rouhani has drawn on Iran's best diplomatic minds, particularly Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, and lobbied the Iranian political establishment to rally behind high-stakes negotiations with the great powers. The efforts have paved off.

FIGURE I
GDP size of largest economies in 2025 and 2050



SOURCE: U'NAMI ET AL. 2003

FIGURE 2
Cumulative Economic Potential of Major Emerging Markets



Source: O'Neill et al. 2005

A final, comprehensive nuclear agreement is yet to be signed. But for the first time in the decade-and-a-half-long Iranian nuclear negotiations we may have a viable deal on our hands. By and large, the international community, including Pope Francis, has welcomed the early-April Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA) framework agreement, which marked the culmination of days-long, gruelling 11th-hour haggling in Lausanne, Switzerland.

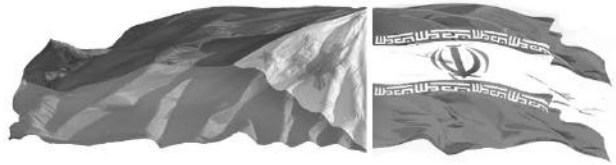
Assuming the negotiating parties arrive at a final deal before the June 30 deadline, Iran could very well emerge as the next major global investment destination - providing enormous trade and investment opportunities to both the West and the East. After all, Iran arguably represents the hottest emerging market in waiting, combining the consumer market and human capital potential of

Turkey with the oil riches of Saudi Arabia, natural gas reserves of Russia, and mineral resources of Australia. Despite enduring decades of sanctions, Iran has managed to establish the Middle East's most expansive industrial base, standing among the world's top 15 steel producers, top 5 cement producers, and top 15 automobile manufacturers. In recent years, Iran has also ventured into cutting-edge sciences, featuring among leading countries in stem-cell research and nanotechnology. Iran cemented its position as the leading Middle Eastern scientific power in 2012, ranking as the world's 17th biggest producer of scientific papers, above Turkey and Israel. Its elite universities, particularly Sharif University of Technology (Iran's MIT) and University of Tehran (Iran's Harvard), have produced some of the most competent engineers and scientists in the world, most notably Maryam Mirzakhani, who became the first woman to win the "Nobel Prize" of mathematics. Embracing greater connectivity, Iran has also stepped up investments in its Internet infrastructure (Heydarian, 2015).

The Philippines, as a major non-NATO ally to the West, should take note of the shifting geopolitical sands in the Middle East. A more stable Middle East, anchored by better ties between Iran and world powers (and other regional leaders), should be fully welcomed and encouraged by the Philippines, which relies on the region for its energy imports. More importantly, a stable Middle East is in the interest of the safety and wellbeing of millions of Filipino Overseas Workers (OFWs), who are spread across the Persian Gulf and beyond, sending billions of dollars in remittances back home annually. And as Iran recalibrates its relations with the rest of the world, there are growing opportunities for stronger ties with rising East Asian stars such as the Philippines. From energy and food security to investments and trade, both countries have a lot to look forward to in their bilateral relations. And today, perhaps more than ever, the stars are aligning for the fruition of such promising potential in Philippine-Iran relations.

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTER-ASIA CULTURAL STUDIES' SUMMER SCHOOL IN THE PHILIPPINES

Dr. Joefe B. Santarita

Associate Professor, University of the Philippines Asian Center

ABSTRACT

To encourage the realization of developing Inter-Asia as mode of developing local, contextual and relevant knowledge practices, the institution of the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Summer School in the University of the Philippines is a program designed for graduate students, teachers and scholars in the Philippines and within Asia is imperative. In the long run, this program will not only build a widespread network for researchers, academics, and artists but also to integrate students into the networks' activities.

This summer school is oriented towards the historical, sociological and anthropological examination of national and transnational processes within Asia. The school's key research areas include the processes of nation building, civil society and religion, cultural globalization and identity making, contemporary politics, and democratization and multiculturalism in Asia. In particular, this school will look closely in the attempts of highlighting the importance of Iran and India in the ongoing discourse on Asia Cultural Studies.

KEYWORDS: Cultural Studies, Inter-Asia Studies

INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the development of the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Summer School (IACSSS) in the Philippines particularly in the University of the Philippines (UP). In particular, the paper revisits the need to study Asia from an Asian point of view and the role of the UP Asian Center in reframing Asia through the offering of a summer school for both Filipino and Asian scholars. It also proposes several activities to include the integration of Iran and India in the school's curriculum as one of the early cradles of civilizations in Asia.

The summer school is basically inspired by the late 20th century intellectual movement in Asia that proposed for the transformation of existing knowledge and at the same time to transform Asians. The existence of Inter-Asia cultural studies in the 1990s and the establishment of a society in the latter years facilitated this ongoing discourse in studying Asia from the Asian point of view. In the Philippines, looking at one-self in the academic circle is not indeed a new phenomenon. In fact, scholars as early as the 1970s such as Zeus Salazar, Virgilio Enriquez, and Prospero Covar among others developed novel concepts that really changed the trajectory of the Philippine Studies. Salazar, for instance, offered his *Pantayong Pananaw* (from-us- for-us) while Enriquez was recognized for his idea on *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology), and Covar for his *Pilipinolohiya* (Pilipinology) [Navarro, 2008]. Parallel developments of similar strength with the Philippine experience also happened in other parts of Asia. Malaysian scholar A.B. Shamsul (2007), however, opines that such development did not completely help in the understanding of Asia. On the contrary, such development has allowed the rise of *methodological nationalism* in various Asian countries particularly in Southeast Asia. Shamsul further noted that the region was divided up into spheres of influence by European colonial powers. Each of the divided colonized components, or colonial states, became modern nation-states after independence with still strong economic and educational ties with its former colonizers. Hence, there exist not only different educational systems in Southeast Asia but also

different knowledge acquisition and production systems, or traditions, informed by the specific needs of nation-building in each of the newly independent nation-states. This gives rise to *methodological nationalism*, a way of constructing knowledge based mainly on the "territoriality" of the nation-state and not on the notion that social life is a universal and borderless phenomenon, hence the creation of the *Indonesian studies*, *Malaysian studies*, *Philippine studies*, *Thai studies* and the like (Samsul, 2007, 140). To address this concern, continuous engagement on Inter-Asia Cultural Studies' discourse is imperative. In the case of the Philippines, the young generation should be exposed to various dialogue links to include their participation in the Inter-Asia summer school among others.

INTER-ASIA CULTURAL STUDIES

But what is Inter-Asia Cultural Studies (IACS)? This is a proposition coming within Asia to transform the existing knowledge and at the same time to change Asian themselves. A noble intention that traces its root as early as 1960s but has been expanded lately and gained large support from various academic circles. Notably, such idea is further highlighted by Chen Kuan-Hsing's book, "Asia as Method," that stresses the Asians' call to use Asia as an imaginary anchoring point. He believed that societies in Asia can become each other's points of reference, so that the understanding of the self may be transformed, and subjectivity rebuilt. Through IACS, *Asia as Method* is an attempt to move forward on decolonization, deimperialization, and de-cold war. Asia as a method is the result of practices growing out of the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies project since the late 1990s. The reframing of Asia is a self-reflexive movement to examine problems and issues emerging out of Asian experiences organizing interventions in various local spaces (Chen, 2010, 211). The inter-Asia that the present generation, according to Ichiyo, is envisaging is not a state-level affair but people's level processes of interaction, cross-fertilization and formation taking place among hundreds of millions of different people, living, speaking, and dreaming differently (Ichiyo, 2010, 178). As such, the movement calls for an intense dialogue among Asians and with others.

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Thus, the Inter-Asia project came into existence. The IACS Society, based in Taiwan, successfully implemented the summer school since 2008. Designed for graduate level students from across Asia, the said school is expected to share concerns about the current political, social, and cultural issues of Asia and beyond in Cultural Studies perspective. To date, the Inter- Asia Cultural Studies Summer School (IACSS) has already organized four summer schools (<http://culturalstudies.asia/about-us/>).

In the ecological mapping of those institutions offering IACSS, it is the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society that successfully implemented the summer school since 2008. It is designed for graduate level students from across Asia who will have the opportunity to share concerns about the current political, social, and cultural issues of Asia and beyond in Cultural Studies perspective. The society is based in Taiwan. In 2008, it organized a summer school themed "Imagining 'Inter Asia-ness' beyond Neo- liberalism" at Yonsei University. In 2010, the summer school was held in SungKongHoe University in Seoul, Korea. The program is an eighth training days including one day for students' presentation. The 2012 camp was held in Bangalore, India under the theme "The Asian Edge." This activity invites students from South, East and Southeast Asia to engage with social, cultural and political concerns in Cultural Studies in Asia through teaching and conversations with experts from across Asia as faculty. Last year, the summer school was held in Hsinchu, Taiwan, which focused on the introduction to modern Asian thought. This brings together faculty and students from different background to engage with in-depth learning and discussion on key issues in modern Asian thought (<http://culturalstudies.asia/about-us/>).

In the Philippines, there are academic institutions both within and outside the UP that offered short courses on Asia particularly on languages. In fact, the UP College of Arts and Letters offered English language cum cultural courses to Japanese undergraduate students annually. Outside UP, the St. Joseph's College of Quezon City provided a 10-day course cum field integration/study tour on Philippine culture and society for both graduate and undergraduate students from Japan and

Thailand. These activities are just limited examples of the efforts made by various academic organizations to introduce the Philippines to Asian counterparts and in a way learn also from them. The proposed summer school in UP will add value to these initiatives by providing opportunity to Filipino participants/young scholars that will be selected from various parts of the country to interact with their counterparts in Asia in general and with Iranians and Indians in particular. The proposed Inter-Asia project in UP will provide avenue to these participants in building knowledge production networks which the UP Asian Center (AC) has undoubtedly the expertise in facilitating this initiative in the Philippines.

AC'S ROLE IN THE IACSS

The AC, as an institution of higher learning with regional focus, traces its origin in 1955 from the Institute of Asian Studies. By 1968, the AC has been mandated by the Republic Act 5334 to develop a closer and broader contact with Asian neighbors in the field of learning and scholarship as well as in promoting the national identity of the Filipinos in relation to other Asian nations through profound studies on Asian cultures, histories, social forces, and aspirations (RA 5334, 1968). Currently, the AC offers the following degree programs: M.A. in Asian Studies; Master in Asian Studies; M.A. in Philippine Studies; and Ph.D. in Philippine Studies. In particular, the AC's current programs focus on West Asia particularly on Iran, South Asia particularly on India, Northeast Asia, and Southeast Asia.

For almost six decades, the AC has trained country and area specialists through its degree programs in Asian and Philippine Studies. By producing a core of country and area specialists, the AC serves the needs of government personnel and private sector entrepreneurs and managers in the process of engaging the nation in the discourse of the community of nations. At the same time, the college through the years also produces foreign graduates who are now serving in various capacities as scholars, bureaucrats and diplomats in their respective countries in Asia.

The AC has local and foreign talents that have expertise on Asia. The college has 14 faculty members and several lecturers whose specializations broadly ranging

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from international relations to political economy, cultural studies, development studies and religion. In particular, the four geo- cultural regions of Asia have at least one resident expert with country specialization and language proficiency. For instance, the West Asian region has an expert trained in the University of Tehran on Iranian language and international relations. Moreover, the AC has also extensive library collections on modern and ancient Asia as well as facilities that cater on the study of Asia.

The college also has forged extensive networks through the years. The framing of Asia in UP, particularly in the AC, is at least partially mediated by various institutions (foundations, professional associations, publishers, journals, research institutes, governments to multinational entities) involved in the social process of knowledge production. Those institutions constitute various inter-institutional networks through forms of collaboration, and each has its own network of associated people (grant recipients, members, authors, subscribers, staffs and alumni). Scholars at individual level also form network of interpersonal ties (educational genealogy, friendship, citation). These networks not only help distribute financial, political, intellectual and social resources for the generation of knowledge about Asia, but also mediate how such knowledge is disseminated, preserved and accessed (IIAS, 2013). Through the years, the AC has been the home of many foreign researchers and visiting scholars doing their research projects on various themes in the Philippines. The college also forges several agreements and consortia as well as collaborates with various regional and global partners for ongoing projects on Asia such as Korean Foundation and Japan Foundation among others. Given this long history of engagement on and with Asia, the AC is indeed prepared to offer the summer school in the Philippines and beyond.

IACS SUMMER SCHOOL IN THE PHILIPPINES

As mentioned earlier, the Inter-Asia project is not new. An earlier generation of intellectuals paved the way, and having learned of their struggles, It is now for the present generation to respond to the challenge of

initiating dialogues and links among critical circles in Asia. Thus, this summer school in the Philippines is a humble contribution to the wider initiative with a motive in mind that 'the use of Asia as method and as an emotional signifier' will hasten regional integration and solidarity (Chen, 2010, 213).

This summer school is oriented towards the historical, sociological and anthropological examination of national and transnational processes within Asia. The school's key research areas range from the processes of nationbuilding, civil society and religion to cultural globalization and identitymaking, contemporary politics, democratization and multiculturalism in Asia. As noted earlier, this school will highlight the importance of Iran and India, as one of the cradles of Asian civilizations, in the ongoing discourse on Asia cultural studies.

Through series of seminars, workshops, film screening, lectures, and fieldtrips, the course challenged the students to look at the development of Asia from historical, sociological and anthropological perspectives. To enhance the learning process, at least 3 prominent Asian scholars particularly from Iran and India aside from AC pool of experts will be invited to serve as resource persons.

The summer school offers a 10-day core course through seminars, taught classrooms, tutorials, open spaces, field trips, and workshops. Workshop that will address specific research topics on contemporary debates is also included. Field trips, on the other hand, include trips in and around the city of Manila, addressing local movements and development in the city (e.g. Asian communities and their social, economic and cultural institutions) are also planned. The academic program is also complemented by a range of cultural events and social activities, which broaden the student's knowledge of the Philippines and the Asian communities present in the country. The series of events includes poetry and prose readings, theater performances, film screenings, art gallery tours, traditional music sessions and a visit to Intramuros or Nayong Pilipino. The curriculum is envisioned to include the modules on Asia in Antiquity and Modern Asia to give the participants an overview of the dynamic and to some extent contrasting realities of Asia. A brief course/module on the nature and strategies of teaching Asia in various

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levels of the educational system is also included. This will prepare the participants to be future educators on Asia and ensure the sustainability of the initiatives in reframing Asia. It is also important to design another module to integrate the long and rich histories of Iran and India to closely introduce these countries and their people to the Filipinos and other Asians.

The summer school's curriculum is also designed to solicit responses from the participants. They will present their own research works and submit their final papers on the last day of the school. As an option, students particularly Asian participants will be encouraged to do the service learning in their chosen locality from those communities/ institutions recommended by the organizing committee. In this way, the participants will be given the chance to understand better the Philippines and broaden their engagement with the fabric of the city. Students can volunteer a couple of hours per week with portfolio of recommended organizations and centers such as religious institutions, Asian self-help movements, and social work agencies.

To determine the participants, students that are registered in post-graduate degree programs both in the Philippines and Asia are all eligible to apply in the Summer school. There are 40 seats and students will be selected based on their applications. Students registered at universities in Southeast Asia, Iran and India will be given considerable priority. In particular, 20 participants will be coming from Visayas, Mindanao and northern Luzon and the rest from Asia. All applications need to be accompanied by a recommendation letter from the teacher for graduate students and supervisor from young teachers/scholars.

The success, therefore, of the summer school greatly depends on the effective planning and efficient use of available resources.

CONCLUSION

To parrot the IACS's agenda, the IACSSS is hoping to provide an avenue in slowly linking and facilitating dialogues between the disconnected critical circles

within Asia and beyond; and offer a platform on which academic and movement intellectual work can intersect. Admittedly, such task is really gargantuan and thus requires serious planning and implementation.

First is that the AC, as the coordinating unit, will create Organizing Committee to include the college's faculty members, staff as well as representatives of regional and global partners including Iranian and perhaps Indian embassies. Terms of Reference (TOR) will subsequently be formulated.

Second is the evaluation of faculty expertise as possible lecturers. This will be simultaneously complemented with the assessment of the facility, personnel and other support mechanisms (reading materials, library). By doing this, possible operating expenses of the program will be identified and will aid in exploring for financial support within and outside the UP.

Third and most important is the development of the school's curriculum. This will include the evaluation of the existing core courses offered by the college to serve as template of the proposed school's curriculum. This will be followed by the identification of college's specialists as lecturers/trainers and facilitators.

Fourth is the organization of the strategic planning workshop to draft modules/syllabi and also plan/arrange the venue and provide cost estimates (e.g. registration fee, transportation and accommodation expenses). It is important to find more resources to improve the conditions of travel and living in order to encourage richer conversations inside and outside the classrooms.

Fifth is to collaborate with the Consortium for Inter-Asia Cultural Studies society in the exploration of possible partners to assist in the lecturing and financial concerns.

Lastly, it is also important to collaborate with various institutions as part of the larger network to support the implementation of the summer school not only in financial but also academic terms. Embassies (e.g. Iran, Indian, etc.), Japan Foundation, Korean Foundation, Asian Foundation, various Chambers of Commerce, Asian communities and circles among others will be tapped to identify scholars as potential lecturers and to extend financial support to sustain the program.

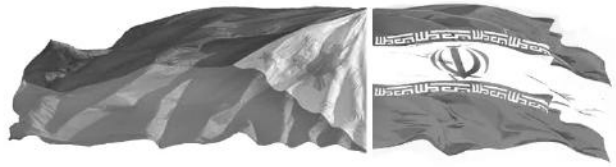
By and large, the holding of IACSSS in the Philippines especially in UP will allow the AC to perform its mandate. It will allow the AC to contribute to

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the UP's role in performing its extension function in nation building. By doing so, the AC will move forward the idea of Asia as a method and subsequently will allow for regional integration, solidarity and relevance. This school will also provide ample avenue for scholars, graduate students and teachers within and outside the Philippines to interact and initiate the continuing dialogues among Asians. More importantly, the synergy with the local movements, activists, artists and researchers and foreign missions through the summer school will fully maximize the efforts of early scholars in the framing of Asia, where Asia becomes a method and now a means.

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POSITION OF IRAN AND THE PHILIPPINES AT THE UNITED NATIONS, 1946-1980s

Prof. Rolando Talampas

Associate Professor, Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman

ABSTRACT

As the Philippine Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations Carlos P. Romulo was succeeded by Iran's own envoy Nasrollah Entezam as the UN General Assembly President for the Fourth and Fifth Sessions, respectively, the two countries shared a number of positions as regards the issues discussed and resolved before the international body.¹

A good number of studies have sought to establish patterns of voting behavior of the different countries relative to the unfolding issues that came with the developments during the Cold War, the attempts of the world powers to draw in international support, and the internal political dynamics within the same countries. The Philippines and Iran, among others, were parties to the non-aligned movement but their alignments in the "caucusing" and voting blocs (Goodwin 1960; Lijphart 1963; Vincent 1969; Hagan 1989) within the UN General Assembly were conditioned by their attitudes towards, for example, the United States in the case of the Philippines and by the Palestinian question (MERIP 1975), the Gulf War and the Iranian Revolution and other Middle Eastern developments in the case of Iran.

This paper surveys the stages in the voting history of Iran and the Philippines in the United Nations General Assembly and identifies some

factors that have paved the road to divergence in their respective choices in key international issues (see, e.g. Powers 1980; Azad 2012; Shenna 2010). It argues that as Iran has been the object of continuous US campaign at isolation as a key element of foreign policy, the Philippines' relationship with the US has been overshadowed by the consideration of its own key interest of securing its nationals.

By drawing from earlier studies on voting behavior at the UN and from existing data sets of the US State Department-Bureau of International Organization Affairs, this paper seeks to map the distance between Iranian and Philippine voting patterns at the UNGA until the 1980s.

KEYWORDS: Philippines, Iran, United Nations General Assembly, voting.

Two countries - Iran and the Philippines - have tied fates. Iran (later Islamic Republic of Iran in March 1981) and the Commonwealth Philippines (yet to be the sovereign Republic of the Philippines in July 1946) joined the United Nations foundation day on October 24, 1945 when 51 countries signed up to abide by the UN Charter. The two countries played important roles in global public opinion making and international action in the early heady days of the Cold War. Their relationships with the United States, perhaps more than any other, seemed to have placed them at the top of the scene. In the case of Iran, views as to the beginning of relationship with the US vary as to motivation or cause. For one, a writer chronicles:

The interest in Iran was due in large part to the country's strategic location, bordering, on the one side, the Persian Gulf and on the other, at least until the collapse of the Soviet Union, sharing a very long border with America's previous adversary. Iran was also important because of its oil. During the Cold War, Iran was both a potential target of Soviet expansionism, against which it had to be protected, and a potential and often real ally in the struggle against the Soviet Union. Finally, as Iran grew wealthier from oil revenues, it became increasingly a market for U. S. goods, arms, industrial equipment, technology, investments, and, during the oil boom years after 1973, the employment of American technicians, advisers, specialists and the like. (Bakhash n.d.)

The US had no firm policy towards Iran in the early 1940s:

The lack of American unanimity on the direction of Washington's post-war policy towards Iran is best illustrated by a private conversation between Stalin and Roosevelt during the Tehran Conference. Stalin expressed Moscow's desire to have access to "a free port on the Persian Gulf " with some form of "an international trusteeship to operate the Iranian State Railroad." Without consultation with his American aides or Tehran, Roosevelt acquiesced to these demands, which could have only emboldened Soviet ambitions in Iran. (Bonakdarian n.d.: 18)

Both the Philippines and Iran looked at the scenario with threats from the outside and the inside and the US provided what would be needed most to secure oil and trade in the case of Iran and an outpost in the west Pacific in the case of the Philippines. One may cautiously sympathize with this conclusion that may as well be similar for the Philippine case in that its leaders were far too often accused of hanging onto Uncle Sam's coat tails while under threat of rural insurgency and the Southeast Asian "falling dominoes," in a manner of speaking:

From 1911 to 1951 U.S.-Iranian relations were framed by a range of changing domestic, regional, and global considerations in both countries. What appears to have remained constant for much of the period is the continued Iranian expectations of greater American involvement in Iran and Washington's determination to avoid extensive entanglement in Iranian affairs. (Bonakdarian n.d.: 21; cf. Rosenblatt n.d.)

Whatever it was though, both countries sat in the newly inaugurated United Nations that has grown to less than 200 members today and their respective permanent envoys presided over the discussions of urgent importance to the so-called Free World. Eighteen representatives have sat for the Philippines that has had 11 presidents since 1946 while Iran has sent only 10 representatives under 10 presidents for the same period. One may readily conclude that nowadays the two countries have had long disagreements over matters sought to be resolved at the sessions of the UN General Assembly.

While that seems to be a short view of their positions, looking back to less than 70 years of their participation at the UNGA would help understand how not only the relationship with US shaped their varying responses but also the internal and external conditions obtaining in these countries that have set the record of their associations with crucial and lingering world issues.

While it is best to rigorously understand the how countries indeed decide on their positions of various issues, a modest attempt to contribute to providing a snapshot of state attitude and conduct can be gleaned from their voting patterns, if any, at the UN GA. Thus, this paper traces how the two countries are situated in the spread of votes cast as regards a number of resolutions. In this regard, this paper has relied heavily on what have previously been presented by a number of analysts of said voting patterns from which data for Iran and the Philippines have been culled. Of late, and since there is hardly updated analysis of this voting pattern, statistics compiled by the US Bureau of International Organization Affairs (BIOA) are used in the contemporary period.

VOTING IN THE UNITED NATIONS: BLOCS AND CAUCUSES

Article 18 of the UN Charter provides guidelines as regards voting, namely, the one-member-one-vote rule, the two-thirds majority of present members' requirement, and disqualifying members in arrears from voting. The guidelines stipulate:

2. Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. These questions shall include: recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council, the election of members of the Trusteeship Council in accordance with paragraph 1 (c) of Article 86, the admission of new Members to the United Nations, the suspension of the rights and privileges of membership, the expulsion of Members, questions relating to the operation of the trusteeship system, and budgetary questions.

3. Decisions on other questions, including the determination of additional categories of questions to be decided by a two-thirds majority, shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting. (UN website)

In the process, and given the realities of such a huge international body with members of varying interests, decision-making has been based largely on show of hands after a roll call or via balloting in the case of elections that are conducted without nominations (Rule 92 [103]). In pursuit of particular goals and interests, member-states resort to bloc voting and so-called "caucusing groups." Bloc voting, in the absence of political parties, has tended to be along particular regional groupings. Holloway explains how bloc voting has evolved:

Bloc voting on East/West lines began with the first General Assembly votes in 1946 and the original disputes of the Cold War period. In its early years, many major UN decisions and appointments were carefully crafted compromises between the two dominant blocs. This pattern suggests that the main factor in world politics and, by reflection, UN voting was the conflict between the two global blocs each led by a superpower. Depending on the looseness of this bipolar system, all states were expected to conform more or less to the positions of a single superpower. States may thus be thought of as arrayed along a continuum from East to West with a possible neutralist position halfway between the two. A Third World voting bloc developed with the expansion of membership in the 1960s. The emergence of a new majority of former colonies shifted the agenda in the General Assembly away from security and superpower concerns to self-determination, anti-colonialism and economic issues. The new majority organized itself on economic issues through the Group of 77 with its demand for a New International Economic Order and on political issues through the Non-Aligned Movement with its presumed abandonment of East/West concerns. One of the initial pledges of the NAM was to define positions of interest to the Third World in an autonomous manner. Nonetheless, the "non-aligned" voting of the NAM bears little resemblance to the traditional "neutralist" voting of Scandinavian countries and therefore the distinction between the two terms is preserved in this study. Regionalism has also been suggested as the basis for UN bloc voting, as is evident in the geographic proximity of the early East

bloc to the USSR and, though more dispersed, the West bloc to the US. The origins of the Third World bloc can be traced to regional roots in the Afro-Arab blocs of the 1960s, which was the basis for majority condemnation of South Africa and Israel.

(Holloway 1990: 279-280)

Meanwhile, so-called "caucusing groups" also exert efforts to maximize possibilities of success of their candidate or proposals.

(C) Caucusing group may be defined as an organization of member states which meets, with some degree of regularity, for the purposes of discussing candidates, question and issues related to the United Nations, in order to facilitate an exchange of information and a degree of consensus. In general, caucusing group activity may be viewed as a phenomenon with "supra-national" implications, because cross-national interactions occur during caucusing group meetings. In addition, the results of such meetings may have an impact on national decision-makers (Vincent 1970: 133)

But given the weak position of less developed countries, they are the ones that are more likely involved in such "supranational" activity, trying to win support from the increasing number of similarly less developed economies. Developed economies tend to be less involved with said groups though as a study points out: "...the higher a group scores on the 'economic development' factor dimension, the less 'supranational' it tends to be." (Vincent 1970: 142)

As for Iran and the Philippines, both countries have historically belonged to the same caucusing Afro-Asian and Asian groups whose members are enumerated as follows:

Afro-Asian Group: Afghanistan, Algeria, Botswana, Burma, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Ceylon, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Leopoldville), Cyprus, Dahomey, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, *Iran*, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi,

Maldiv Islands, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, *Philippines*, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Thai-land, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Republic, Upper Volta, Yemen, and Zambia

Asian Group: Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Cyprus, India, Indonesia, *Iran*, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldiv Islands, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, *Philippines*, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, and Yemen. (Vincent 1970: 148)

Do blocs and groups explain much? Hardly. Russett (1966: 327) sates that: "It might well be argued that because of the majority-rule principle the smaller and poorer states have an incentive to band together in the UN that they do not have elsewhere. Thus the discovery of a "bloc" of underdeveloped countries in the UN proves nothing about the cohesion of that "bloc" in other contexts."

The other point about being in the same bloc or group seeks to describe how Iran and the Philippines have situated themselves in the range of questions raised for resolution at the General Assembly.

Voting behaviour in the UN GA has been studied using so-called "factor analysis" and multidimensional scaling (MDS). In 1963, the Philippines found itself at a different location:

This second factor then picks out, in addition to the Brazzaville Africans, both several of the more pro-Western Asians (Philippines and Pakistan, plus Israel) and a number of Latin Americans who are rather to the "east" of their caucusing group (Uruguay and Bolivia, for example). (Russett 1966:334)

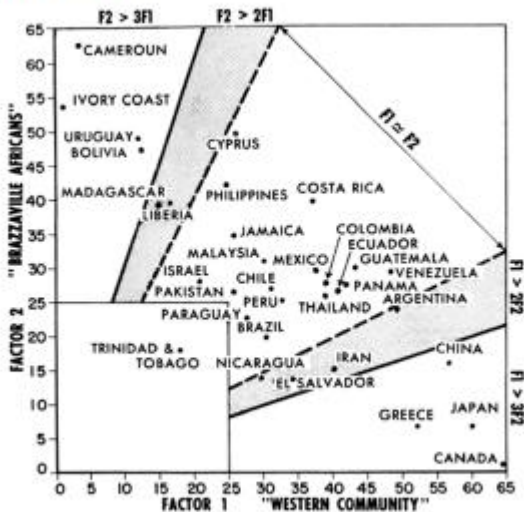
FIGURE I
United Nations Groupings in 1963

Nation	Factor 1 "Western Community" 23%	Factor 2 "Brazzaville Africans" 17%	Factor 3 "Afro- Asians" 16%	Factor 4 "Communist Bloc" 11%	Factor 5 "Conserva- tive Arabs" 4%	Factor 6 "Iberia" 2%
Iran	.61	.38	-.01	-.04	.33	-.04
*Philippines	.49	.63	.09	-.05	.26	.03

Source: Russett 1966: 331-332 (Table I)

POSITION OF IRAN AND THE PHILIPPINES AT THE UNITED NATIONS, 1946-1980s

Below one finds how the “factor loadings” help visualize where Iran and the Philippines were located.



Source: Russett 1966:335

Powers (1980: 176-177) also followed on the heels of Vincent and carried on his factor loading analysis, and comparing the Philippines and Iran, we extract the relevant data for the two countries. Powers proposes "oblique" solutions if one is set to look for "coherence and similarity in voting blocs" and the "orthogonal solution" for the "voting behaviour of states." What his study has shown is the preference for the "orthogonal solution" for both Iran and the Philippines: "The orthogonal solution yielded a "Latin America and Western Oriented" factor of 24 states - every country in Latin America save Cuba, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago but *Iran*, China, Israel, Malaysia, *Philippines*, Turkey and Thailand as well " (Powers 1980-179; emphasis supplied)

COUNTRY 69%	Factor 1 Developing World	Factor 2 Western (Developed) Community	Factor 3 Muslim Community	Factor 4 Latin America	Factor 5 Social Rite	Factor 7 China and Africa	COMMUNITIES	
	21%	13.5%	11.5%	7%	8%	2%	Original	Final
							(α^2)	(α^2)
Philippines	.10	.55	.52	.51	.00	-.06	.804	.528
Iran	.05	.14	.84	.06	-.05	-.00	.821	.768

Another effort at using factor analysis to correlate "national attributes" with "delegate attributes" has been done by Vincent (1968) with words of caution about concluding straight relationships that do not shed much light on the relationships between rich and poor countries represented at the UN GA. In 1971, though "national attributes" were used by a researcher to determine the predictors of voting behaviour and found significant behaviours on non-dyadic actors (Vincent 1971).

PHILIPPINES AND IRAN: THEIR RECORDS

The other manner of analyzing voting behavior is by way of multidimensional scaling or MDS.

At the onset, it may be well to state how the Philippines and Iran have conducted themselves. It seems that the Philippines with two other countries have brilliant records of participation in the GA sessions: "Only three states- the Philippines, Brazil, and Japan-ranked among the upper fourth in the majority of sessions" (Rowe 1969: 239). Meaning, these countries were consistently present in the company of winners as the table below shows:

TABLE 1
RANK OF WIN-LOSS SCORES* FOR SELECTED MAJOR COUNTRIES* DURING EACH
OF TWENTY REGULAR GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSIONS

Country	General Assembly Regular Sessions																				All Sessions Average Ranking	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		21
Philippines	1	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1.4	
Brazil	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	1-2	2	1	1	1	3	2	1.5	
Japan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	1	1	1	1-2	2	3	1.6	
Turkey	1	3	1-2	3	1	2-3	3	3	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1-2	2	2	1	2	1.9	
Mexico	1-2	3	2	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	3	3	1	1	1-2	4	2	2.0	
China	3	3	3	1	1	3	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	2	3	2	2	1	2	3	2.0	
Pakistan	-	4	4	2	3	1-2	3	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	3	3	1	2	1-3	2.1	
United States	3	1	1	3	1	3-4	3	3	3	2-3	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	4	2.3	
Spain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	2	3	3	2	4	4	1	2.3	
Italy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2-3	2	2	2-3	1	2	1-2	2	4	4	2.3	
Canada	2	1	2	4	2-3	3-4	3	4	3	2-3	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	4	4	2.4	
Nigeria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	2.5

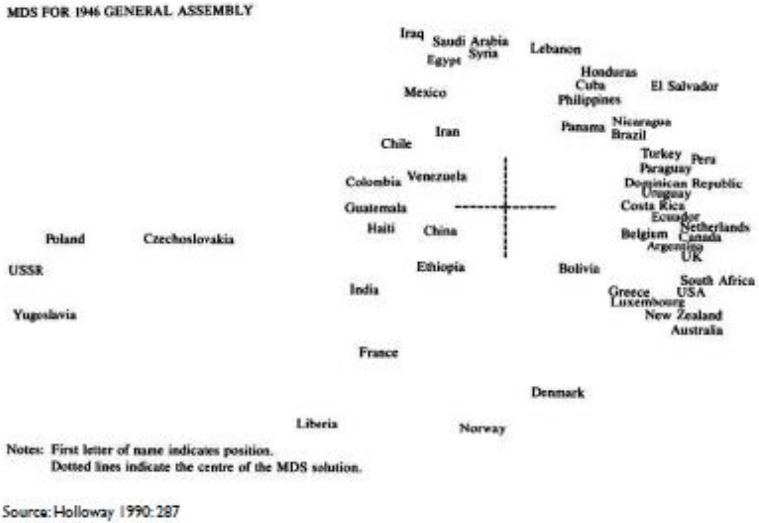
Source: Rowe 1969: 240

Iran's record has been one of movement from one voting bloc to another. In the company of two others (Cuba and China), Iran has moved away from its Afro-Asian bloc from 1946-1955 to the Latin American bloc from 1955-1973. "The data seem to suggest these bloc changes, and in these cases there were internal political changes that would be consistent with a change of bloc," say Holcombe and Sobel (1996: 33, n. 12). They add that "...when changes in domestic politics caused coalition changes, that was cited as potential evidence of instability in our methodology. The exceptions were the assigning of China, Cuba, and Iran to new blocs after political realignments in those countries, but such a reassignment is clearly warranted in those cases. (Holcombe and Sobel 1996: 33, n. 17)

MULTIDIMENSIONAL SCALING, PHILIPPINES AND IRAN:
1946, 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985

To visualize how countries but especially Iran and the Philippines were close in their votes, Holloway has relied on five UNGA data for five UNGA voting records to undertake multidimensional scaling. According to Holloway:

Multidimensional scaling is a powerful tool for mapping the location of cases or voting nations based on similarities or differences among them. Through an iterative process, MDS adjusts the positions of voting states so that the distance between any pair of states is equal to the dissimilarity of their voting records. Nations, which vote in a similar manner, are located near each other; nations, which disagree, are spaced far from each other. The routine simultaneously adjusts all the positions so that the resulting figure represents a best fit for the data. (Holloway 1990: 284)



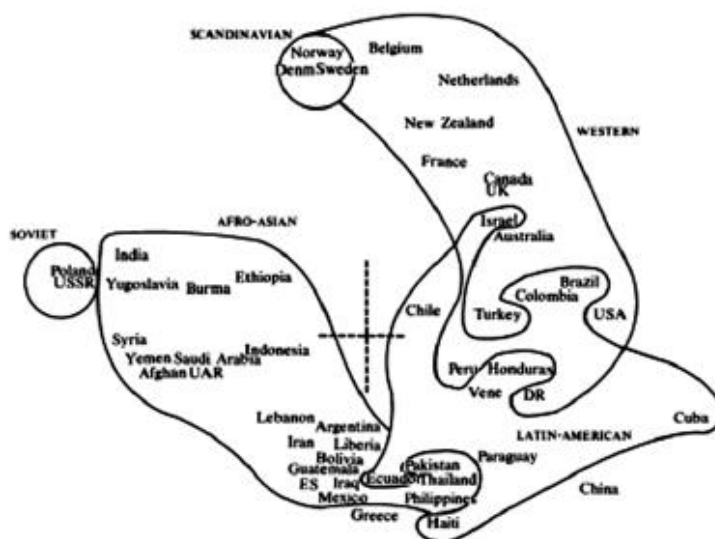
From 1946 to 1955, there was little Soviet activity in the Middle East except in Iran, claim Stevens (1957:139), and the pervasive atmosphere and attitude was one of neutralism. Iran. Stevens describes the basis and the form Iran's own predicament:

Iran's early post-war attempts to reinforce its historic neutral position, once the crisis over Azerbaijan was past, set a pattern which most of its Arab neighbors were eventually to adopt. There was, until the Mossadegh era, a general appreciation that Iran's geographical situation and oil resources made its neutrality, a condition for survival. Iran therefore turned very early to two other neutral sources of support. The first was the United Nations, particularly the specialized social agencies. A second element of strength was sought in alliances with neighboring Muslim states. Pakistan's emergence as an independent country gave impetus to the growing sentiment among Iranians and other Muslims favouring closer collaboration on common problems (Stevens 1957:141).

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Into the 1950s and beyond, Iran and the Philippines, among five countries (Iraq, Pakistan and Thailand) accepted the doctrine of "collective security" to put to rest questions of ability to protect their independence (Stevens 1957: 144; see also Gareau 1970: 960). In the following decade, Iran found a very helpful ally in the UNGA and elsewhere with South Korea, but the revolutionary change would later place Iran closer with North Korea for its arms needs while its enemy neighbor Iraq would be closer with South Korea (Azad 2012: 168 et seq.).

MDS FOR 1955 GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Legend:

Afghan = Afghanistan
 Denm = Denmark
 DR = Dominican Republic
 ES = El Salvador
 Vene = Venezuela

Note: Encircled nations are in blocs found by Hanna Newcombe, Michael Rose and Alan G. Newcombe, "United Nations Voting Patterns," *International Organization* 24 (1970), 100-21.

Source: Holloway 1990: 288

Such Iranian and Philippine acceptance of collective security may help explain why the MDS for 1955 puts these two countries very close to each other in their votes in the UNGA.

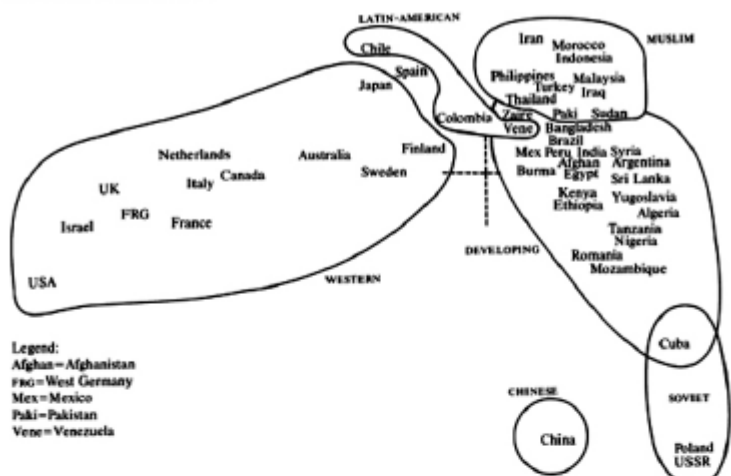
MDS FOR 1965 GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Anxious of Russia, Egypt, and Iraq, Iran in the early 1960s tried to acquire modern US military hardware. However, US reluctance to provide further military aid to Iran and its insistence to sell the hardware instead drove Iran closer to Russia from where it got what it wanted (Chubin and Zabih 1974: 107). Thus, no matter how Iran tried to affirm closeness to the US, the new US policies on arms sales and the increasing US involvement in Vietnam, among others, Iran drew closer to Russia.

POSITION OF IRAN AND THE PHILIPPINES AT THE UNITED NATIONS, 1946-1980s

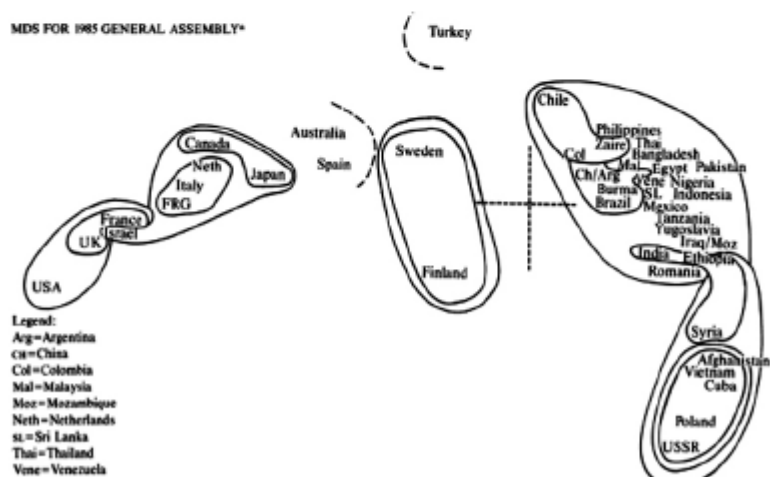
MDS FOR 1975 GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Note: Encircled nations are in blocs found by Richard Powers, "United Nations Voting Alignments: A New Equilibrium," *Western Political Quarterly* 33 (1980), 167-84.

Source: Holloway 1990: 293

MDS FOR 1985 GENERAL ASSEMBLY*



a Sudan and Kenya are on same position as Egypt; Peru same position as Venezuela; Iran same position as Yugoslavia; Mozambique is below Iraq.
Circles derived from cluster analysis.

Source: Holloway 1990: 294

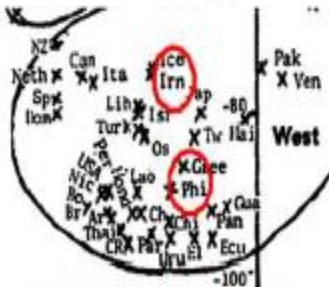
Newcombe et al (1970) also used "factor loading" but claim to use "more extensive data" than used by Alker and Russett for the UNGA voting history 1946-1963. Without going into the details of their data analysis and procedure, one can easily conclude that their findings as far as Iran and the Philippines are concerned are more or less the same. Below are magnified snapshots of their visualizations of Iranian and Philippine voting behavior throughout the Cold War period.



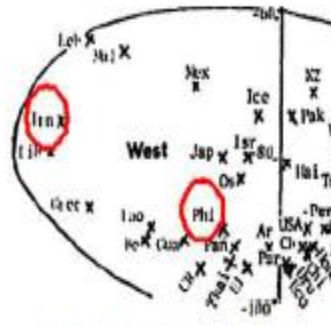
Factor Analysis of Nation-Blocs in United Nations Voting, 1946-50



Factor Analysis of Nation-Blocs in United Nations Voting, 1951-55



Factor Analysis of Nation-Blocs in United Nations Voting, 1956-59



Factor Analysis of Nation-Blocs in United Nations Voting, 1956-59

Source: Newcombe et al (1970)

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Reviewing the Iranian and Philippine records in the UN General Assembly, a number of analysts have sought to establish the patterns of their voting for or against increasingly submitted resolutions. For the most part, the Philippines and Iran have been grouped with Afro-Asian bloc or group whose members seem to have voted in like manner although at times the votes especially as regards their particular interests diverged. Both countries carried a long relationship with foreign countries, notably the USSR and the USA, the time covered by UNGA voting studies being the bipolar world. The difference though is that Iran had occasion to turn to Soviet, North Korean and later Chinese ties owing to its security needs while the Philippines only had the US, then as today, for its support. But no matter, said the studies, aid had little relationship with voting in the UNGA.

Surely, the voting in the UNGA by Iran and the Philippines and by all other countries that have relied on the world organization to show interest in world affairs and the desire to be part of the search for world peace and development.

As time past seems to indicate, voting is one thing while acting and working in pursuit of the vote is an entirely different matter. Iran and the Philippines do share concern for global survival, but their own survival on past and future occasions will surely dictate how they will vote and work, at the UN or elsewhere.

NOTE

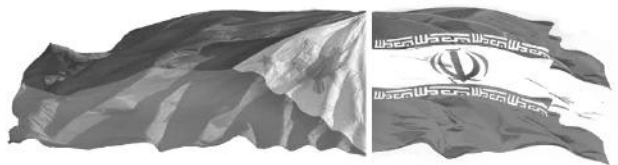
- 1 While Romulo is known to have a part in McArthur's leadership selection and appointment in the Korean War, Entezam and his allies ensured that US plans for escalation of the war beyond Korea did not happen. (See Stueck 2008: 274)

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500-1000 YEARS OF THE PHILIPPINE-IRAN CULTURAL EXCHANGES: A LINGUISTIC APPROACH

Mahmood Sadeghi Tajar, Ph.D

Iranian independent writer

ABSTRACT

Being the first empire in history (see Philip Grassier, World History, New York. 1970, p. 17) the Persian Empire or Ancient Iran (if the early “Aryans in the land” is to be included) were naturally the first people to expand and to extend their cultural, political, social and even religious influences, far beyond their own boundaries.

This research focuses on Philippine- Iran cultural and linguistic ties. Iran’s cultural influence, both before the Islamic era and after, reached Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippine islands through two directions: India and China. To better understand cultural and religious connections between these two nations, I would approach it from the “linguistic gate” which is my own specialization, being familiar with the major languages of the Middle East, Southwest Asia, Southeast Asia and the Philippines, in particular.

KEYWORDS: Iranian cultural influence, Persian words, Filipino

INTRODUCTION

Formal diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran dates back to 1965. This opened the door for closer exchanges between the Iranians and Filipinos, with the first group of the Filipino overseas workers (OFW's) to the Middle East going to Iran. This was even before Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, etc., became the destination of hundreds of thousands of Filipino workers. It was also at this time that the first batch of Iranian students came to study in Philippine colleges and universities ("Susan Ople Report," Panorama magazine Nov. 31, 2009).

Having been among those students (1977) made me want to dig deeper into this relationship. Likewise, my being a linguist who is familiar with Middle Eastern, South East Asian and South West Asian languages (12 in all) gives me a more panoramic view of the cultural and historical relationships between these two great nations i.e. Malayo-Iranian cultural exchanges, which goes way back 1000 years up to the present.

THE PERSIAN CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Being the first empire in history (see Philip Grassier, *World History*, New York. 1970, p. 17) the Persian Empire or Ancient Iran (if the early "Aryans in the land" is to be included) were naturally the first people to expand and to extend their cultural, political, social and even religious influences, far beyond their own boundaries. For example after the peaceful conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great and the Liberation of the Jews from 70 years of slavery, he declared the first chapter of the human rights in the world some 2,500 years ago which emphasized the freedom of religion and culture for all and prohibition of slavery all over the Persian empire. (See "Cyrus Cylinder of Human Rights"/Tablet/British Museum Catalogue No. BMWAA 90920)

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DARIUS THE GREAT CONTINUED THE MISSION

Considering that in the Bible (the Book of Ester in the Old Testament) King Cyrus of Persia is considered “A Man with a mission from God and a “Prophet” (just like “Zul Qarnain” in the Holy Qur’an. See the English translation and Commentary of the Holy Qur’an: A. Yusof Ali, p. 761) It is not surprising that he started the right path that was followed by his successors King Kambiz/Cambyses 529-522 B.C. (ancestor of the early Cambodians in South East Asia) and King Darius the Great and others.

At the height of its glory, the first “Global Power” consisted of 25 countries and territories, and 100 nationalities with 45 % of the known world’s population, stretching from India to Arabia up to Africa and to the boundaries of Greece in Europe, from the Hindu River to Danube and from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea and from the Nile to the Red Sea, connected by digging the “Suez Canal in ancient Egypt. (See Discovery Channel, July 31, 2006)

PERSIAN CULTURE IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

When the two branches of the Aryans (Iran-Indian) separated in Central Asia, one branch stayed in the land, which we now call greater Persia (that includes all- “stan” countries like Tajikistan, Qazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Turkemenistan Turkistan, Tataristan, Qirqizistan as well as the present day Iran; while the other branch known as “Aryan/Brahmin went to India, to dominate the native Indians/Dravidians who were migrants from Africa, long time ago (see “World History”).

From that time to the arrival of the “Palava” or “Pahlavi/Pahlavan” (Palawan/Palaos) and the Campucmean warriors to the Indian subcontinent (including today’s Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, etc.) and the Indo-Chinese regions of Siyam (Thailand), Cambodia, Burma, (Myanmar) and China, it expanded from there and it also reached

Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines.

The Philippines and Iran Cultural Ties

This research focuses on Philippine- Iran cultural and linguistic ties. Iran's cultural influence, both before the Islamic era and after, reached Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippine islands through two directions: India and China.

To better understand cultural and religious connections between these two nations, I would approach it from the "linguistic gate" which is my own specialization, being familiar with the major languages of the Middle East, Southwest Asia, Southeast Asia and the Philippines, in particular.

The major languages of the Middle East and Indian subcontinent used in my research are: Arabic, Persian, Urdu/ Hindi, Hebrew, Assyrian and Aramaic. On the other hand, the major languages of Southeast Asia that I have concentrated on are the following: Filipino/Tagalog, Bahasa/Malayo, Indonesian and Brunei, Spanish (as the colonial language that links both the Filipino nation on the one hand and the Islamic world through 800 years of "Moorish Presence" in Spain) and English (another colonial language that also connects different cultures and civilization today).

PRE- ISLAMIC AND POST-ISLAMIC PERSIAN WORDS IN FILIPINO

It was due to an inquiry from a linguistics professor in the Philippines, Prof. Maria Kristina Manuelli of the Department of Linguistics, whether the words "Na-khora/Nakhoda/Abdast/ Bang Datu/Sari-manok /May-nilad/Kom-ao,etc., were of Persian origin that led me to further research on this subject.

Since then, I found some 90 words of Persian and Pahlavi origin in the Filipino language beginning with taga-ilog (people of the riverside) up to Muslim Filipino dialects like “Maranao /Maguindanao/Tausug/Iranun, etc.”

According to the late Dean of U. P. Islamic Studies, Dr. Caesar Adib Majul, there are some 600 words in Filipino language that are of Arabic and Persian origin. Examples of which are the following:

1. *The Names of the Days of the Week in Muslim South.*

Names of the Days of the Week in Maranao, Maguindanao, and

Tausug:

Monday = Isnim (= Ethnaym)

Tuesday = Talaata (= Thalatha)

Wednesday = Ar-baa (= Ar-ba-ah)

Thursday = Khamis (= Khamees)

Friday = Jomaa (= Jom-ah)

Saturday = Saptu (= As-sabt)

Sunday = Akad (= Al-Ahad)

2. *Words like:*

1) Salamat

2) Akala

3) Alam

4) Labas

5) Kitil (Qatl)

6) Dilim

7) Mamatay (Maat)

8) Ala Eh =Allah Eh!

9) Bastah (package, see Father English's Tagalog-English Dictionary)

10) Alak (Araq)

11) Hayop =Hayy =Living beings

12) Warak (=a leaf of a tree or of a book, etc)

- 13) Kapre (=Kafir, unbeliever)
- 14) Takot (=Taqwa)
- 15) Aba! =strange, wonderful. (See Persian Names p. 1)
- 16) Abayari =Abyari = thin/dove
- 17) Batya = from Arabic Batya, but originally Persian meaning basin

Some more Persian words in Filipino:

1. korma = dates (the well-known sweet fruit)
2. kam-aw = kom-aw = jug of water (see Father English Dictionary of Tagalog-English)
3. Carabao/Cubao/Tamarao = Cow of Au = (Persian word for water (Water Cow/Buffalo))
4. All names ending in "Au" like Lanao/Davao/Maranao/Mindanao = is Persian word for water (like Eau de Cologne)
5. Datu/Ratu (chieftain) from the Persian origin, meaning "Chieftain" just like "Nakhuda/Nakhura" see Persian Names by Maneka Gandhi/India 1994 edition, p. 367
6. Cabin (Persian "marriage ceremony") Cavin Du-a among the Tausugs
7. Mana/(Tagalog mana = similar/ka mukha or taking after someone/something) Persian related to the Persian prophet Mani (300 A.D.) See Persian Names (by Maneka Gandhi/India 1994)
8. Salakot = Persian "kola-khod" special cap or headgear for Muslim Datus (like Nur Misuari style)
9. Barzanji (Muslim chants) religious songs. It is also known as "Barzani" the famous Kurdish/Persian tribe in Iraq and Iran. A form of "Qawwali" originated in ancient Persia.
10. Darageen (epic songs of Mindanao) probably from Persian "Taraneh" = song/chants/epics, etc.
11. Abdan (water jug/small pool) in the entrance of the palace or mansions of Datus.

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12. Pusa = cat in Filipino, probably from the Persian word “Puzah” which refers to the “snout” of the animal. Nguso in Tagalog or “snout” sounds very close to “Puzah” or “Puzeh” in old Persian.
13. Adarna (Ibong Adarna/Darna) The name of a big flying bird with long neck and legs, is a famous Persian bird.
14. Bata (= Persian = Bach-cha) a “child”
15. Bazar or Bazaar (= the Persian markets with caravan/checks/havala/bank,etc.)
16. Labi (= Lab) – or lips
17. Lakad (= Lagad) – the legs/kicking with legs/walking, etc.
18. Basta (Spanish, but ultimately from the Persian word “Bas” meaning “enough” or “enough already, stop!”) etc. See Tagalog-English Dictionary p. 166 (Note: even in Arabic language, this Persian word is used, also in Hindi/Urdu, etc.)
19. Bayad (=must, what is necessary) due, payment, etc.
20. Hataw (=At once, see The Persian Names p. 165)
21. Yan (=Aan/Un)
22. Yin (=In/Hamin)
23. Ine (=Ineh!)
24. Warat (=Warat) see Amid Persian Dictionary
25. Pilikmata (=Pelke(chashm))
26. Yaya (=Daya/Dayeh)
27. Takure (=Quri)
28. Bobo (=Babu)
29. Bato (=Batu/see Persian Names p. 84)
30. Kulong (=Kolun, a kind of lock in olden days behind the doors/gates, etc.)
31. Lugao (=the “ao” is definitely a Persian/Aryan word for water like Lanao/Davao/Carabao/Tamarao, as well as “Eau de Cologne!”)
32. Siopao (see Lugao explanation)
33. Sabaw (=Shurba/Soup/Broth) See Lugao explanation

34. Wasak (=from Arabic, but ultimately from Persian) broken, destroyed
35. Lahar (El-Khar = Khar-re = mud)
36. Mukha (=from Arabic, but ultimately from Persian)
37. Dangwa (=Dangua, Country, Land, see Persian Names p. 106)
38. Pasay City, from Turkish Pasha (=Prince) ultimately from Persian Padeshah (=small king/prince vs. Shah = the Great King). Pasay City was the city ruled by the son of Rajah Lakandula of Tondo, therefore it became “the city of the Pash” or Pasay City. (Note: Pasay Road in Makati City and several other similar names of places)
39. Pasig River – probably from “Pasa Ilog” (River of the Prince/Ruler or the “Prince of Rivers” from the Persian Pasha/Padshah (see Pasay City))
40. Marawi City – probably from the ancient Persian city of “Marv” or “Merv” which is now in the Central Asian Republic of Turkmenistan.
41. Cotabato (cota-bato or castle of stone) the word cota comes from a Persian word meaning “mound/castle” and “bato” is another Persian word meaning “stone/seeds of cherry etc.” like “buto” in Tagalog. (See Persian Names/India/1994 p. 84). Even the city of “Quetta” in Pakistan and Kuwait in the Persian Gulf are related to the Persian word “kota” or “castle.”
42. Buto = from Persian “Butu” = pill/seeds of cherry etc.
43. Dusa, from Persian word Duzakh meaning Hell/hardship. (see Tagalog-English Dictionary by Father English, National Bookstore, 2002.)
44. Ilaw = light, probably from Persian sun god “Ra” or “Mitra.”
45. Araw = “Day or sun” probably from “Ra” or Mitra the Persian sun god (see Ilao)

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46. Paa = from Persian word “paa” meaning leg (=like the Persian words of “pa-jamah” or pyjama the “cloth of legs.” See Webster)
47. Salawal = from the Persian word “Shalwar” (Also used in Indian, Arabic, and some other languages) meaning “pants.” (Note: in European languages it is used as “saviwalis,” see Webster English Dictionary.
48. Nanay = from Persian word of endearment for mother (Note: Even mother is from Persian “madar”)
49. Tatay = father, from the Persian word “Dada” meaning “old man” or father
50. Salabat = from “Sharbat” in Arabic and Persian, but ultimately from the Persian “Shar-Ab” or “Zar-Ab” meaning “Golden water” or “wine.” Today it means also any sweet drinks (soft/hard). Even the English “syrup” comes from that Persian word “Sharbat.”
51. Bulol = the rice god of the native Filipinos, probably from “Boh-lul” a legendary Arabian/Persian mystic of the 8th century A.D. (contemporary of the Khalifah Harun Ar-rashid – 764-809 A.D.)
52. Batalla = Either from the Indo-Aryan (=Persian) “veda” or “vatara” who was a deity, or from Arabic “Baitullah,” “House of God”/
Batara = chief/leader/great man/nakhoda
53. Padre = from the Spanish for “priest” or father, but ultimately from Aryan (=Iranian) word pedar/petar meaning “father.” (Like Jupiter – the father of Zeus.)
54. Madre = from the Spanish word “Madre” meaning “nun” or female Catholic religious worker, but ultimately from the Aryan (=Iranian) word “Madar” or mother.
55. Kaka = from the Persian word “Kaka” meaning elder brother (=from the Pahlavi-Avestan word of “Ha-Kha” as in the Ha-Kham in Hebrew, meaning “Rabbi” or the “Ha-Kham-Ens” the Achaemenian dynasty of Cyrus the Great – see Persian Names/India/1994 p. 156)

56. Kuya = from the old Persian “Ha-Akhu” or “Akhuy” meaning elder brother (see “Kaka” for details).
57. Hiya = from Arabic “Hayaa” meaning “shyness/shamefulness/shame.” It’s also used in Persian in the same meaning.
58. “Ao” = the most famous suffix in Tagalog language like: Mindanao/Lanao/Davao/Cubao/Carabao/Tamarao etc. All come from that Persian word “ao” for water. Just like “Punjab” in India and Pakistan, from the Persian “panj-aab” meaning “five waters/rivers.”
59. Aub-dast = the Muslim word for Ablution (=wudu in Arabic) comes from the Persian word “Aa” (see “Ao”) and “dast” the Persian word for “Hand.” It means “washing hand for prayers.” (Note: Even Chinese Muslims in Hong Kong or the mainland China use Aub-dast. Even Eastern European Muslims in the Balkans and the former Yugoslavia say the same.)
60. Alabang = from two Persian and Arabic words of Allah (meaning God) and “Bang” (like the Big Bang), the Persian word for “call” (to prayer) meaning “To shout or inform the people for prayer to Allah). The towns of Alabang in Metro Manila and Malabang in Mindanao probably got their names from Allah + Bang!
61. Farman = the Persian word for “order/command/ruling.” It is used by the Muslim Filipinos to mean the “Teachings of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.).
62. Iranon = the famous Muslim tribe of Mindanao probably from an “Aryan” ancestry or “Iranian.” Also take note of the “Iraya” festivals and the Irian-Jaya in Indonesia and Ireland (=Land of the Aryans) etc.

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63. Hukom = the judge in Filipino comes from the Arabic word meaning "ruler" or "judge" but that also comes from the Hebrew "Ha-Kham" (=Rabbi/Judge) and finally from the old Persian Ha-Kham-Ems (=the ruler/protector of the people) see Persian Names p. 156
64. Araw ng Hukom = The Day of Judgment, both words of Araw and Hukum are originally Persian (See Araw and Hukum for details)
65. Siyasat = the Filipino word for "investigation by government agencies," probably from the Arabic/Persian origin of "syasat" which means "Governance/Policy/Politics/Punishment," etc.
66. Panjtan = Either from the Indo-Aryan (=Iranian) "Panchait" meaning the "Village Council/Council of the Elders" or from the "Pantjan," the "Five Holy Members of the Family of the Holy Prophet Muhammad a.s." about whom the verse 33 of the Chapter 33 in the Holy Qur'an, was revealed.
67. Mano-Sya = A human being, a man, from the Indo-Aryan (=Iranian) "man." "Mana" meaning "mind"/"Human." (See Persian Names p. 259)
68. Manok = chicken comes from the Persian "manuk" and later on "Morgha" meaning "chicken." See Persian Words p. 261
69. Sari-manok = from the legendary Persian bird of "Simorgh" which is in the famous Persian epic of Rustom and Suhrab in the Shahnamah of Firdausi. (See "Islamic Far East" by Prof. Isaac Donoso/ University of the Philippines Press/ 2013/p. 165)
70. Ito = Filipino for "This/this is . . ." from the old Persian origin of "Eton" meaning this (Note: Also in the Slavic languages like Russian it's used as: "Eta" meaning this)
71. Tabo = from the Persian word "Aub-tabā" = water holder or Taba for any container of water, food, etc.
72. Samar = probably from "Samar-kant," the Ancient Persian City in Central Asia (Now part of Uzbekistan) which was named after the King Samar. (See Persian Names p. 390)

73. Ahon = probably from the Persian word "Ahon," a cave or an underground way meaning a road, a path. (See Persian Dictionary of Ameer p. 77)
74. Sako = from the Spanish word saco = sac but ultimately from the Persian "saak"
75. Kalabasa, from the Spanish word calabasa meaning squash which itself comes from the Persian word "Khar-boza" (probably during the 700 years of Moorish rule in Spain, where most of the "Arab" scholars there were actually Persian Muslims, whose Islamic names and Islamic looks were mistaken as "Arabs across the board" as the word Saracin (=meaning Khorasanis or Persian Muslims in the Islamic Army) meant "Arab" to the whole world!
76. Ama = from the Persian word "Ama" (=God) See the Persian Names p. 27.
77. Manila = comes from the word May-Nilad which is the Persian word "Nila/Nilu/Nilufat" meaning lily flower as well as lotus. So, May-Nilad means where lily flowers grow abundantly.
78. Ustad (=the religious teacher or guru) comes from the same Persian word. The Filipino and Chinese Muslims use it for their religious teachers (Note: Even in Arabic, the same old Persian word is in use, today)
79. Palawan = probably from the Persian word "Palava" or "Palaba" or "Pahlavi" meaning "warriors" "nobles/city people vs. villagers." Even in India and Java and probably "Palao" in the Pacific Ocean, the words go back to the Persian tribe of Pahlavi (see "Hinduism" by H. K. Narayan, 2001)
80. Pagoda = the Buddhist Temple, comes from the Persian word "Bot-Kada" (=house of idols). See Webster Dictionary.
81. Abdan = the "water jar" in the entrance of the palaces of Datus in Mindanao comes from the Persian word "Aub" = water + Dan = place or "water holder/container of water."

82. Barzanji or Barzangi = from the Persian word Bar + zang/zanj meaning religious chants about Allah, or about the Holy Prophet Mohammad or his descendants or the Sharifos in Mindanao.
83. Here are some Persian Names in the Filipino languages: 1) Rajah Humabon of Cebu from Indian-Aryan (= Iranian Rajah = Ruler) and Humayun the legendary Persian King. 2) Rustum 3) Sohrab 4) Cyrus 5) Darius 6) Parvin 7) Firdausi 8) Pasha 9) Xerxes 10) Firooza 11) Roxan/Roxana 12) Bandali (Banda Ali) 13) Panjatan 14) Mitra 15) Amil Hosain 16) Amil Hasan 17) Fariba 18) Shahana 19) Malawani, etc.
84. Sataran= The “Maranao” Muslims pronounciation of “chatarunga” the Sanskrit for chess, but with the Persian accent of “Shatrang”. This word like many others reached the Philippines through China coming from Central Asia/Ancient Persia.
85. Siyamat=The “Maranao” Muslims pronounciation of chessmate or “Shah-mat” or the King of “Shocked”
86. Bidadari= woman of Heaven =Houris of Paradise/Nymph
87. Binhi= From the Persian “Bin/Bon, meaning “Root” of the tree/seed/sperm, etc. In other Irano- European language like German its “von” and in Dutch its “van”. In Malay it is also “wan”.(Ref. “Tagalog-English Dictionary” by Father L. English/ National Bookstore/Manila 2011/p. 204 In Arabic and Hebrew (both Semites) its “Bin/Ibn, which are also from the Persian/Pahlavi/Avestan “Bon”
88. Gayuma= The “Love Potion”, from the Persian “Geyoma” (also “Homa/Soma”) meaning the “Holy Wine/Holy Drink” in the fire temple of the Zoroastrians of Persia (also the Origin of the Holy Bread and Wine in Christianity, etc.) “The Persian Names”
89. Nguso = muzzle/snout, from the Persian “nus” (See “Ameel Persian Dictionary”/Tehran/Iran 2005. P.1182)

For more details please see this written article on “Persian Influences in South East Asia” plus the “Contribution of Persia to the World Civilization.”

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ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

DR. POTRE DIAMPUAN is trained as a British Council fellow on Approaches to Intercultural Understanding through English Language Teaching at Collingwood College, University of Durham, United Kingdom. Along this line, she has been extending teacher trainings on teaching strategies where intercultural and interfaith understanding is beautifully interlaced into language and other courses. Dr. Diampuan's professional and diverse experiences, including but not limited to interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding and as an educator bespeak of her broad skills and competencies. She held consultancy jobs including and continues to be a freelance lecturer. She is well connected with some of the faith communities in Metro Manila and other interfaith dialogue/cooperation advocates. After a diverse interfaith and peacebuilding experience in many countries with the United Religions Initiative (URI) as Regional Coordinator for SEA and Pacific Region since 2012, beginning in January 2015, she is now a URI Senior Interfaith Representative to the Philippines.

MARIANO A. DUMIA is a retired career diplomat with the rank of Chief Mission (Ambassador). He served for 33 years in the Foreign Service with his last assignment as Former Chief of Mission (CM) and *Charge d' Affaires* at the Philippine Embassy in Tehran from 2010 to 2012. Earlier, he served at the same embassy as Minister and Consul General from 1996 to 1997. He also served in various capacities such as *Charge d' Affaires* and Consul General at the Philippine Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon; *Charge d' Affaires*, Minister and Consul General in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; *Charge d' Affaires* and Consul General in Doha, Qatar; Vice consul and Consul, Bangkok, Thailand; *Charge d' Affaires* and Vice Consul, Vientiane, Laos, and Consul at the Philippine Consulate General in Sydney, Australia. Mr. Dumia earned his Bachelor's degree in Education (BSE), major in History from the Pasig Catholic College; a Master's degree in History from the Manuel L. Quezon University and a Master in National Security Administration (MNSA) from the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP). He is a recipient of the Presidential *Gawad Mabini Award*, the Philippine Foreign Service's highest award in recognition of his outstanding service to overseas Filipino workers in the Middle East and for his dedication, honesty and courage in the defense of the integrity of the Foreign Service. He also received the "*Outstanding Alumni Award*" from the National Defense College of the Philippines in recognition of his services in the promotion of National Security.

Ambassador Dumia is the author of the books, "*The Ifugao World* (1979) and "*Of Dreams, Sweat and Tears: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Modern Filipino Heroes*" (2009). His other published works are "*The Tripoli Agreement: Its Legacy to Filipino Solidarity*" (1981), and the "*Moro National Liberation Front and the Organization of the Islamic Conference: Its Implications to National Security*(1996). Amb. Dumia is currently a senior lecturer at the Department of International Studies, Miriam College, Quezon City.

JAVAD F. HEYDARIAN is an Assistant Professor in political science at De La Salle University, Philippines, where he teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on international relations, development, and governance. He has authored more than 400 articles/policy-papers on Asian geopolitical and economic affairs, contributing to major think tanks such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington) and Lowy Institute (Sydney) on East Asian security, and writing for and/or interviewed by leading publications such as Bloomberg, New York Times, Foreign Affairs, Wall Street Journal, Aljazeera among others. He is the author of "*How Capitalism Failed the Arab World: The Economic Roots and Precarious Future of the Middle East Uprisings*" (London, 2014), which was described by Princeton University Emeritus Professor Richard Falk as the book that "gives the best understanding of why the upheavals of 2011 took place."

ZAINAB M. JAVIER holds a degree in AB Political Science from the Philippine Christian University, Manila, with B.S. Elementary Education units from the Tayabas Western Academy, Quezon. She worked as Secretary and Researcher at the Iranian Cultural Section and also served as the assistant editor of the Cultural Perspective Magazine. She also taught and was a Students' Affairs Officer at the Al Mustafa College in Makati. She was the Executive Assistant of Commissioner Robert M. Alonto upon his assumption of office at the Bangsamoro Transition Commission under the Office of the President. She has produced numerous articles and has delivered them both in national and international conferences. *Imam Khomeini's (R.A.) View on the Role of Women in Society* ; *The Roadmap to Global Peace: Challenges And Opportunities*; *Israel and a Mantle of Lies*; *Confronting and Defeating the Soft Wars*, *The Taming of the Kandahar Beast* are just some of her articles. She also attended international conferences such as: 2nd Muslim Scholarly Women's International Conference on Media, Family and Islamic Civilization; 7th International Conference on the Doctrine Of Mahdism; Islam and Interfaith Dialogue; 2011 Seminar on Hajj: A Journey Towards Perfection and some others. She is an active member of the Muslim Women's Center for Change and the Philippine-Iran Cultural and Scientific Society, Inc.

DR. JOEFE B. SANTARITA is an associate professor and currently the college secretary of the Asian Center, University of the Philippines in Diliman. He completed his doctoral degree in South Asian Studies from the National University of Singapore. His research interests and publications focus on Indian Studies, Migration Studies, Philippine Culture and Society, Maritime History, and Southeast Asian Political Economy.

DR. HENELITO A. SEVILLA JR. is an Assistant Professor at the Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman. He holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of Tehran, a Master's Degree in International Relations from the University of Shahid Bahesti, Tehran and Bachelor of Science in International Relations at the King Faisal Center for Islamic, Arabic, and Asian Studies, Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Philippines. Dr. Sevilla's interests are Islamic world, Middle East Politics and governance, Persian Gulf security issues, resource competition, super power competition and Philippine external relations. He has been consulted by local and foreign diplomats in various occasions in developments in Middle East and has extensively written and published research articles for national and international refereed journals and has presented lectures and papers both in the Philippines and abroad such as Iran, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Indonesia, China, Korea, United States, Malaysia, etc. At present, Dr. Sevilla is writing two book projects: *International Relations and Middle East*; *Beyond Human labor and the Black Gold: Evaluating Philippine Relations with Middle Eastern Countries*. Some of his publications are: *Why the Middle East Matter to the Philippines*; *The Nationalization of Saudi labor market and its Implications to the Philippines*; *The Philippine Bid for Observer Status at the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC)*; *Turkish Cultural Diplomacy in the Philippines*, *Re-thinking the Political Mindset of the Persian Gulf Security*; and *Middle Eastern Migrant Communities in the Philippines: An Exploratory Study*. He is currently the coordinator of the West Asian Studies Program of the Asian Center University of the Philippines and has been elected as president of the Philippine-Iran Cultural and Scientific Society, Inc. an organization duly registered at Security and Exchanged Commission (SEC), Philippines. He was elected president of the Filipino-Irano Community, Association in Tehran, Iran where he served for four years.

EMMEVIENE ANN P. SUELTO is currently working on her MA in Asian Studies with a specialization in West Asia at the Asian Center, UP-Diliman. She worked for 6 years in Doha, Qatar as an Editorial Coordinator for The Peninsula, an English daily newspaper and as a writer/researcher for Q- Guide magazine. She has a bachelor's degree in Communication Arts at the Ateneo de Manila University.

DR. MAHMOOD SADEGHI TAJAR is an Iranian independent writer based in the Philippines. He has published various articles and books related to Persian literature, culture and Islamic history.

ROLANDO TALAMPAS earned his MA Asian Studies from the Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman, wrote a series of articles during the Gulf War for the defunct *Dyaryo Filipino* (sister newspaper of Daily Globe), and researched on migrant workers in the Middle East. He has been teaching for nearly three decades, among others, courses on the Middle East and North Africa. He was seconded to the National Defense College of Philippines as its director of the Institute of Academic Studies. On returning to UP Manila, he was coordinator of the graduate program of College of Arts and Sciences and director of Information Management Service. Moving to the Asian Center in 2011, he assumed the position of Assistant to the Dean for Research and Publications and later College Secretary. More recently, he is an affiliate faculty at the UP Open University's MA ASEAN Studies program. He has been involved in projects for the WHO (Geneva), Unesco (Paris), ILO (Manila), the VPRO (The Netherlands), the World Bank, and several state agencies (DSWD, DOH, DOST-PCHRD, among others). He was fellow at ILO-Turin, APCSS-Honolulu, SEASREP and the UP-CIDS. He has presented papers at the European Southeast Asian Studies conferences in Hamburg, Paris, and Naples; International conference on Philippine Studies in Michigan and Kyoto; APISA-CODESRIA conference in Senegal; Borderlands conferences in Copenhagen and Hong Kong; ASEAN studies in Yogyakarta; and lectured before audiences at the University of Luzern and Seahealth in Denmark, among others. From time to time, Roli publishes his photographs in the Manila Bulletin's "Picture Perfect" page.

Photos



H.E. Ambassador Aliasghar Mohammadi, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Manila, H.E. Ambassador Mariano Dumia, Former Charges d' affaires, Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines in Iran, H.E. Mehmanparast, Deputy Minister of Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs discussing Public Diplomacy at a Forum Organized by the Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman and the Philippine-Iran Cultural and Scientific Society, Inc. last 8 July 2014.



Public Diplomacy Forum at the Asian Center University of the Philippines Diliman. Also in the photo were Dean J Wadi of the Institute of the Islamic Studies, University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, Dr. Henelito A. Sevilla, Jr, President of the Philippine-Iran Cultural and Scientific Society, Inc., and members of the Iranian delegation and University of the Philippines academic community.



Iranian Ambassador H.E. Aliasghar Mohammadi and Honorable Kiyomars Amiri of the Iranian Cultural Counsellorship in Manila during the Persian Musical Performance at the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines



Member of the Iranian Musical Group demonstrating Tumbak to Filipino students



Iranian 50th National Day Reception in Makati City. In the photo are Dr. Reuben Cañete and Dr. Henelito A. Sevilla, Jr. of the Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman, Ambassador Mariano Dumia, former Charges d' affaires, Philippine Embassy in Iran, H.E. Rafael Seguis, Undersecretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Manila, H.E. Ambassador Aliasghar Mohammadi and 3rd Counselor of the Iranian Embassy Saeid Baghban



Celebrating the 36th Islamic Iran anniversary at the University of the Philippines through the first International Conference of Philippine-Iran Bilateral Relations: 50 Years and Beyond jointly organized by the University of the Philippines Asian Center, Iranian Embassy in Manila, Iranian Cultural Counsellorship in Manila, Foreign Service Institute, Department of Foreign Affairs, Manila, and the Philippine-Iran Cultural and Scientific Society, Inc.



36th Anniversary Celebration of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman. In these photos are UP officials and Asian and Iranian diplomatic representatives



Dr. Kiyomars Amiri, the late Iranian Cultural Counsellor delivering a welcoming speech at the International Conference on Philippine-Iran Bilateral Relations at the University of the Philippines



Members of the Global Half-Filipino Iranians and Filipino professors at the International Conference on Philippine-Iran Relations, University of the Philippines Diliman



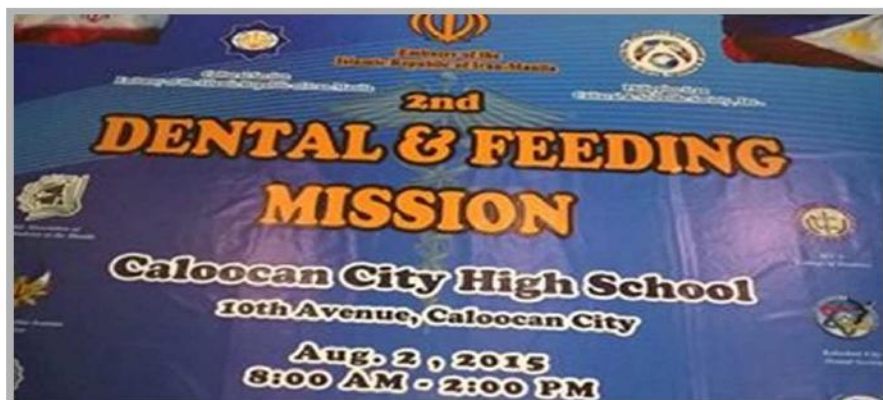
Hossien Karimi, President of the Global Half Filipino-Iranian, Inc., Mesagh Bahadoran of the Azkals Football Team and Darios Zandi



Officers of the Philippine-Iran Cultural and Scientific Society, Incorporated meeting Iranian Ambassador H.E. Aliasghar Mohammadi and Dr. Kiomarsh Amiri of the Iranian Cultural Counsellorship, Manila to discuss the upcoming feeding and dental mission in Caloocan City, Philippines



Iranian Dental Students in Manila busy preparing food packs for the upcoming dental and feeding mission in Caloocan City. Also in the photo is Dr. Samadi of the Iranian Cultural Section in Manila



A banner used during the dental and feeding mission last 2 of August 2015



Dr. Samadi of the Iranian Cultural Section distributing food packs to the needy Filipinos during the dental and feeding mission



Iranian Ambassador Aliasghar Mohammadi chatting with one of the 500 patients during the food and feeding mission



Iranian Ambassador Aliasghar Mohammadi with Filipino children during the dental and feeding mission



Conference on Iran and the Philippines at the University of the Philippines on 26 February 2012



An Iranian dental student assisting a Filipino patient in its dental mission, Holy Spirit Quezon City.



Mr. Hossien Karimi, President of the Global Half Filipino-Iranian, Dr. Faiyaz, Dr. Henelito A. Sevilla, Jr, President of the Philippine-Iran Cultural and Scientific Society, Inc. during marketing for feeding mission in Manila and Mr. Mahdi Abolghasemi, former OIC of the Cultural Section of the Iranian Embassy



Filipinos and Iranian friends attended the 37th Anniversary of the Victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, last 11 February 2016 at the Dusit Thani Manila.



Iranian Musical Group, performed at the 37th Anniversary of the Victory of the Islamic Republic of Iran last 11 February 2016



Iranian Ambassador H.E. Mohammad Tanhaei, His Excellency Rafael Seguis and His Excellency Martin at the 37th Anniversary of the Victory of the Islamic Republic of Iran last 11 February 2016



Team Persian Kings, the first basketball team of Iranians and Filipino-Iranians in the Philippines. Courtesy of <https://www.facebook.com/Persian-Kings-163931166964055/>



UN Futsal, https://www.facebook.com/groups/iranian.futsal.manila/1299794080046204/?notif_t=group_activity



PHILIPPINE-IRAN RELATIONS 50 Years and Beyond

PHILIPPINE-IRAN RELATIONS: Fifty Years and Beyond speaks about the bilateral relations between the two countries from a multifaceted approach. It seeks to problematize the overall framework of the relationship in 50 years, while trying to find answers on what direction the Philippines and Iran shall follow in the coming years. It can be argued that for the past five decades, various factors emanating from domestic environment of the two states defined the nature of their relations; however, it cannot be denied also that factors external to the states had significantly influenced state projection, perception, reaction and level of cooperation for the past 50 years. Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979 and the subsequent establishment of the Islamic Republic in that country received mixed reactions from the Filipino people. Iran used to be one of the destination countries in the Middle East region by Overseas Filipino Workers prior to the 1979 revolution. The decades following revolution witnessed the decreasing number of Filipinos in that country. While the two countries maintain cordial diplomatic relations, this did not, however, transform into a substantial increase in trade volume, active tourism cooperation, and dynamic political, cultural and scientific exchanges between the two countries. External elements such as the US factor and the international media portrayal (like the BBC and CNN) on Iran greatly influence and shape perception and expectations in these two countries.

This volume comprises nine articles with different area focus in the bilateral relations of Philippines and Iran.

It is our hope that this publication will help us understand the dynamics of Philippine-Iran bilateral relations and eventually encourage academics, practitioners and concerned individuals to engage in more productive research activities to help strengthen ties between our two countries.

HENELITO A. SEMILLA, JR.
Editor