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**THE PHILIPPINE ELECTION**

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**RITCHIE:** I'd like to ask what was it that brought you back to the Philippines?

**VALEO:** We should make it a point that this is a postscript now to the regular interview. I was invited by a friend of mine to come over, since I had been so long associated with the situation, primarily to see the election—not as an observer or anything like that but just to see how it developed. The friend was a relative of President Marcos, his brother-in-law to be specific. We were old friends and it was his suggestion that I come over and see the election campaign. That's why I went back.

**RITCHIE:** This was in early February?

**VALEO:** Yes, it would have been very early February. I was there for about three or four weeks before the election, enough time to see the build-up to it. Actually, the campaign did not run for much longer than that, because they had a constitutional limitation on the length of the campaign. The constitution was the product of a lot of political scientists and lawyers, I should add. The constitution they were functioning under was one essentially modeled after the French system.

**RITCHIE:** Were you there to help advise them on what to do with all these American delegations that were coming over?

**VALEO:** Well, to a degree that was it. My friend was bewildered by the number of people who were coming. The Filipinos were not used to having that many people interested in their affairs. That showed up in the press. There wasn't very much I could advise him on in connection with it, but that was one of the things I'm sure that made him anxious. He wanted to be sure that in the treatment of the foreigners, they were doing the right thing. I think they wanted some guidance on that, whether or not that was of real significance or not I don't know, but that could have been a factor in the invitation.

**RITCHIE:** What kind of suggestions did you have for them?

**VALEO:** Well, I took President Marcos' own statement as a starting point. He had said, when first queried on TV on this, "We'll have a snap election," somebody had said "Are you going to let the U.S. press in to see it," he said, "You can all come." So I suggested that since he had invited them, the press should be given as much access to whatever they thought they wanted to see, within reason. I didn't think they had to go further with Americans than anyone else. Whatever they gave to Americans I thought they ought to give to other foreign correspondents, and I thought that they ought to give to foreign

correspondents substantially what they gave to their own domestic correspondents. Actually, as it worked out, they gave more to the foreigners, as usual. That brought a kind of uncomfortable, angry reaction from Philippine journalists who claimed that the foreigners were getting more access than they were.

Much of this was involved with whether correspondents could go inside the polling places. There was a statutory regulation that prohibited anyone who was not directly involved in either voting or watching the polls from being within a hundred yards (or something like that) of the polling place, that is a common approach in elections. It wasn't an attempt to conceal anything, in my judgment. It was simply the way most polls are handled throughout the world. That's the way we certainly handle elections in this country. You set up a line and you say if you're voting or a poll-watcher or an official you go in, if you're not you stay behind the line to do your last-minute campaigning. You can't campaign on the inner side of the line. I think it was essentially the same kind of thing in the Philippine election. Much was made in the press about excluding foreign correspondents from the polling places, the implication being that the Filipinos didn't want them to see what was going on. I think that was outrageously inaccurate. It had nothing to do with that.

When the foreign press, particularly the U.S. press, complained, again Marcos overrode the general regulation and issued

some sort of order which said that they could have access to the polling places. Actually, the access meant so very little in terms of whether the election was honest or not. There were ninety thousand polling places and even with about a thousand foreign correspondents there, which eventually they built up to an incredible number—you can see how many polling places could be covered. I guess Evans and Novak got further afield than almost anyone else. Their view of the election was somewhat different from the other correspondents But most of the observing by correspondents was right around Manila.

I think that in assessing this election you have to look at it—at least I did—from three or four different perspectives. The first was the question of the integrity of the electoral process itself. I would say that in theory it was designed by law as though to produce scrupulous honesty. In terms of the actual honesty of the election, it had in the light of our concepts, probably less integrity than an election under Richard Daly in Chicago would have had and a lot more integrity than an election in most southern states would have had before the passing of the civil rights legislation in 1964. That's where it would fall on the scale of integrity that I would develop, somewhere in there. In those situations, Daly or pre-1964 south we never felt that the fraud that was involved, or the exclusion of voters which took place, was sufficient to negate the results of an election.

It was difficult for me to understand then why we could take this holier than thou attitude in terms of the Philippine elections.

We could say: well, we've come a long way since Daly's Chicago or the 1964 south. That's true, but the Philippines also has far less capabilities and resources to conduct an election than we have had. So my own view of it was the election in the Philippines was about, if you put it in terms of another scale, in terms of the elections in the Philippines going back through the commonwealth period, this election would be no worse certainly, and perhaps somewhat better than the others that I'm familiar with at least going back to the early fifties. This would have been somewhat better. There were practices in the election which we would now find horrifying in an American election. However, we would not have found them horrifying thirty or forty years ago. I think the election has to be put in a time frame perspective. These islands are in many ways and, not just in matters of elections, about thirty or forty years behind where we are at any given moment. They use pencils to mark ballots. We use machines. I say that without any smugness. I just think it helps to understand what actually happened.

There was a lot of buying of votes. I would by no means say that that was one-sided—they were undoubtedly bought on both sides. Whoever had the money bought the votes. Much of it is a

local process in the Philippines. I had to compare it with my own experiences as a boy growing up in Brooklyn. We had a mayor called Hylan who, whenever an election approached, always had free operas in Ebbits Field where the ball team played. He had Metropolitan Opera stars who would come and sing. I'm sure they were paid for it. At the intermission Hylan would get up and say: "Did you like the music?" And here were thirty, forty thousand people who had seen a free opera, many of them had never seen one before, and they'd all cheer. He'd say: "Now, don't forget, Mayor Hylan made this possible. On election day go out and vote." Now, a lot of the so-called fraud in the Philippine elections was of that kind.

In addition to that there was the purchase of votes for about the equivalent of maybe a dollar and a half U.S., two dollars. That probably was the going rate for votes. Again I go back to an experience I had in '46, in the United States, right after Roosevelt's death. When I came back from the war I was having a drink with a politician from Kentucky, a newly arrived Democratic politician, local politician from some quasi-rural area of Kentucky. "You know," he said, "there's been years with Roosevelt when people didn't even know who their congressman was. That's all going to change now, Frank, that's got to change. You know how we do it in Kentucky? We line them up and say 'Here's your two dollars, here's your two dollars, now you go down and vote and

you vote this way.' That's the way we do it in Kentucky." Now, that was 1946. Something like that happened in the Philippines, I would think.

I would not limit it to one group. The assumption that all the money was on the side of those supporting Marcos is quite erroneous. There was money on both sides in the election, and where it was used, how much it was used, I have no way of telling. I don't think anybody else does either. Certainly it was used, I'm sure it was a factor, that's part of the history of Philippine political practices. Another element in it was: Marcos would go—I followed him to one major rally in Negros Island. Maybe thirty or forty thousand people had turned out for it. At the end of the speech Marcos said, "I'm putting an edict out today, we're going to cut the electric light rates in this province by twenty percent," or something of that sort. And of course everybody cheered. Very, very similar to the kinds of things I knew as a boy in politics in New York City and also something which still goes on in our national politics, when a president announces a new construction project in a state with a tight race. So, sure, I don't like to see those things, but I know also that the Philippines is a country where elections are still relatively primitive and the difference with some of our practices is largely a matter of wealth and sophistication.

One has to match against this the fact that the Philippine government mobilized—and again I don't want to sound like I'm simply defending Marcos, although I believe that he's been terribly, terribly maligned—first of all, that there was an election at all was due to Marcos. Second of all, his government mobilized something like eighty thousand people, public servants primarily and school teachers, to run the polling places. Well, that's an extraordinary feat in a country which is as primitive in many ways as the Philippines are in terms of communication. I can recall the previous election—I did not see this in this election, but in the previous election for the Botaasan, the legislative body, I went to a number of polling places myself. There were polling places where they didn't even have pencils to write up the ballots. This was not somebody trying deliberately to discourage voting; somebody just had forgotten to bring the pencils so they had to wait till somebody went out and got some pencils.

They also tried to mark people's fingernails in indelible ink in that election as in this so they wouldn't vote twice, and then it was found that the indelible ink didn't hold up. Again, I don't think that was a deliberate thing. Where did you get the ink? It was a local indelible ink and it didn't work that well. In any event, how many people would have scrubbed it off so that they could vote twice? I don't think there were many people scrubbing their fingers. I think the whole impression that was



created by the press reports with reference to things like that was that this was a trumped up election from beginning to end. It was a false impression. I don't know about the count, but I know the election itself was a genuine, bona fide election and a very serious effort was made to get people to vote and to vote without duress. Except in usages on a local level in a few places there was little attempt to coerce that vote; to buy it, perhaps, but not to coerce it.

I think that's the true picture of what happened; it was an extraordinary performance in many ways. You had a turn out of 70 or 80 percent of the eligible voters. The average in the United States is fifty, or it's been so in recent years, not much more than fifty. I think both sides acknowledged that the effort to run an honest election—to run an election, let me put it that way, honest or dishonest, we'll leave that to another point—but the effort to run a creditable election was very genuine. The president made speeches, as did others, on TV with the theme: "Go out and vote." He didn't say, "Vote for me," he just said, "Go out and vote." There were all sorts of appeals, every twenty minutes, half hour, on the radio or TV, "It's your country, go out and vote." Again it was done on what we would describe as a nonpartisan basis. That didn't come across in the news reporting of those elections. You saw only the other side of it, a nun sitting on a ballot box to protest it or reports of

violence, much of it based on either hearsay or only on the most limited amount of actual observation.

You come to the tally, and who won it. Well, there were four unofficial counts of the votes going on simultaneously when I was there. I stayed through these countings of the ballots. One was run by something called NAMFREL, which was generally reported in the U.S. press to be the upright and the honest count. Actually, I don't think it was anymore upright than the other counts, but it was sponsored primarily by—I think one ought to get this into the record: NAMFREL, the national association for fair elections, was the concept of it. It was described as a citizens watch dog group. Actually, NAMFREL was started during the Magsaysay election and it was started with our money. CIA supported it as a tool for helping Magsaysay get elected. The main sponsor of NAMFREL in the present period was the Catholic Church, based in Manila. The man who headed it was a businessman who was not one of Marcos' favorites, let's put it that way, who is now the minister for commerce and industry in the Aquino government. They did use a lot of very good people to run the count. They used nuns and priests among others, but it was very clear, the NAMFREL count was generally acknowledged to be the pro-Aquino count.

Against that was something called the Comelec, the commission on elections, which was the official body for the conduct of the election, they were the ones that set up the whole election.

Their count, also unofficial, was regarded as the Marcos count. There was a big to-do before the election between NAMFREL, which was then appointed as the citizen's arm of the Comelec to carry on the "unofficial" count, but it was obvious that there was a constant tension between the two groups. Comelec was trying to control NAMFREL, and NAMFREL was trying to do its own thing. Well, they finally reached an agreement and promptly broke it when the counting began. Both were unofficial counts; under the constitution the only official count was the one that took place when they opened the ballot boxes, officially sealed ballot boxes, in the legislative body and the ballots were counted in the legislative body and showed Marcos the winner. In addition to that there was the TV count. The stations were getting their own reports of results and it was coming over TV and radio. TV again was regarded essentially as pro-Marcos. So you had all of these counts going on simultaneously in the day or two immediately after the election.

When I left the Philippines the count had been very, very slow up until that point. Of course there were charges that this was deliberate, that the Marcos people were trying to see how many votes they needed before they decided what they had counted. That may be part of it, I don't know. I have no way of telling; I don't think anybody else has any way of telling. But I do know that there are also other explanations for the slowness: the vote

had to go from the localities to the provincial headquarters, from the precincts to a local collection point, and then from the provincial headquarters to Manila. If you know the Philippines, with seven thousand islands, it is not surprising to me that it takes a day, or two days, or three days, or four days for this sort of thing to come through. That reality was never made clear in the U.S. press; that, as a factor, was never acknowledged in the press. It was automatically assumed that delays had something to do with an attempt to further develop the fraudulent victory for Marcos because the press had already pitched its reporting in the framework of a struggle between good and evil, with Marcos the personification of the latter.

I assumed—again, discounting a lot of things that may have been involved, like purchasing votes and other voting frauds in some localities—but when the votes finally came in, my own personal estimate was that Marcos had won the actual count by upwards of a million votes. I base that on one main consideration. I had done some calculating and I had watched the press earlier in terms of how the layout of strengths were in the islands. The key to Aquino's political or voter strength was in the immediate environs of Manila, Metro-Manila was the one area where you could actually observe the election. Her people's own claims were that she would carry the region by a million votes. My own view was that if she didn't carry it by a million, there would be no way she could

possibly win the election. She carried the region by two hundred thousand, and that, oddly enough, was the one count which was listed by all the counters that was roughly consistent. Give or take a few thousand votes, they all acknowledged that she had carried the region by that relatively small majority. Until that point there had been no complaints about excluding voters from the registrations.

When it became obvious, however, that the count was obviously going to develop this way, around a two hundred thousand vote majority, rather than the million she needed as a minimum, then the claims began to be raised that there had been a deliberate attempt to exclude Aquino voters from the registration rolls. That would have been an impossible thing to do in any great numbers. That people were denied the voting in the area of Manila because of registration flaws or other technicalities is true, but there is no way of telling whether they were Aquino supporters or Marcos supporters, and I would challenge anyone to show me the kind of local poll watching that would be able to distinguish, in polling places where there fifteen or twenty thousand voters, who was an Aquino voter and who wasn't. There would be no way you could do that with any accuracy. If there was an exclusion of voters, my guess was that it was probably fairly evenly distributed. And that there was an exclusion of voters again is not so much, I think, a reflection of a wide scale deliberate attempt to do

that, but rather one of the realities of trying to run an election rolls in a very primitive place, politically speaking, without any of the modern machinery of elections. You're talking about people who did it all by hand. Again, that was never acknowledged as a major factor by the U.S. press. We constantly saw this election in terms of an American election where you've got machines, computers and the whole works. It didn't exist there.

When I left the Philippines I assumed Marcos had won by about a million votes. Interestingly enough, the so called pro-Marcos count showed him winning by somewhere around a million seven, the pro-Aquino count showed her winning by six or seven hundred thousand, but they acknowledged that they had counters in only 80 percent of the provinces. One of the provinces which they hadn't counted at all was Marcos' home province, where he probably ran a plurality in the end of at least five or six hundred thousand, that would be a minimum. I forget which the other provinces were but they weren't around Manila. So no matter how you put it, given the distribution of strength, any reasonable vote count would have shown him either as winning the election or at the worst so close that you couldn't even call it. But to interpret the election a few hours after the polls closed as a victory for Aquino was to me a total distortion of the reality of the situation.

One can argue for days on end on how Marcos built his voter strength or where he got his strength. One could do the same thing for Aquino. In his case, I think the strength came primarily from the government machinery, particularly on the local levels outside Manila, which was essentially made up of his supporters and from the poor. In her case it was the Roman Catholic Church under Jaime Sin. I think, by the time the election took place, it was generally recognized in Manila that Marcos was running not against Aquino but against Jaime Sin. The vote against Marcos was actually a vote for change, more than it was a vote for Aquino, except for the city of Manila and perhaps Cebu City in the Visayas and a few other essentially urbanizing areas. I think that was generally the reality of the situation. I assumed Marcos had not only won the election but that he would be inaugurated. There would be resistance in the streets to be sure, but I didn't expect an enormous amount of this. It was very quiet when I left Manila.

I didn't anticipate several things. I didn't anticipate first of all, and most important, the defection of Enrile and Ramos, which turned what had been until that time essentially a civilian opposition to Marcos into essentially a military mutiny. If Aquino is president today it is certainly by no clear-cut mandate of a vote in the election. She's president because of the mobs in Manila who were turned out by Sin's Roman Catholic Church, and

she's president because of the Ramos and Enrile defection which split the military force, a mutiny which was then in a sense undermined by ourselves, largely from Clark Field. Thinking about this for days afterwards, I've come to the conclusion that the result was preordained. The scenario had been written. Had Marcos lost the election in the count, then it would have been described as an honest election, or relatively honest election, but no thanks to Marcos. But I'm convinced that we were not prepared to accept a Marcos victory in any circumstances. Our support, and obviously our inclination, was very clear, we really were sustaining Aquino at every turn, whenever we could.

Whatever aid we may have given financially, if we did, was probably given through Jaime Sin—this is certainly conjecture on my part. There are no documents to support it and there wouldn't be in any event. But Aquino did not hurt for money. Her supporters bought a lot of TV time. They had Radio Veritas, the Catholic station. Her supporters could have bought a lot of votes. I don't think she personally bought votes anymore than Marcos personally bought votes, but a lot of votes could have been bought for her. Her main instrument, her main political machinery, was the Roman Catholic organization which was dead-set against Marcos. I can go way back into this. I explored this much further on this last visit. If you want it in the record it will be there: Marcos' father was not a Catholic to begin with. There



is something in the Philippines called the Iglesia ny Cristo, which literally means the Church of Christ. This was the nearest thing to an Anglican church in the Philippines. His father was a member of that church. His village in the province of Llocos Norte, the town where he came from, was 90 percent Iglesia ny Cristo. His mother was a Catholic, and Catholicism, of course, is the religion of politics in the Philippines. Marcos adopted his mother's religion.

It's fascinating to see this as an element in this situation. Marcos was suspect of the Catholic Church for twenty years at least. He was suspect even when he was in the Congress. The government TV station in the Philippines, in all the time that I've been in the Philippines, never showed a Catholic evangelizing broadcast that I can remember. They've shown the papal visit and things of that sort, but I don't recall ever seeing any evangelizing going on on the government station. Yet everyday you turn that station on and there are evangelists from Virginia Beach or somewhere in the states, who are preaching and evangelizing on the government TV station in the Philippines, in English and Tagalos. I raised that question with friends of mine. I said, "Why do you have this anachronism here?" I never got a satisfactory answer. I thought, well, these sects must have an awful lot of money and they're buying time. I'm not at all sure that was the whole story.

That church—the Iglesia ny Christo—is three million strong in the Philippines now and they were solid for Marcos. The leader of the church made no bones about it, that Marcos was a person he had supported since he began running for office. It's a fascinating sidelight, and I sense that it was in some ways very much involved in the undercurrents of the political forces in the country.

**RITCHIE:** I wondered what you thought about the congressional delegation that was headed by Senator Richard Lugar?

**VALEO:** I followed it only through the press. I couldn't tell, really, what they were doing. They had a large group. I think they met with the Bataasan leaders. They were at first greeted rather pleasantly. I don't think it was overdone, but they were greeted pleasantly. Although there was some anger on the part of the local press over what was regarded as an intrusion into Philippine affairs. There was some expression of that in the press. But I thought Lugar made a mistake by starting to talk before he left the country. He should have guarded his peace. I don't think the group had any effect on the election, but I think from the point of view of proper conduct, it was a serious mistake to give out anything to the press while still there, it was a form of intervening. On the other hand, there were so many American press people around, I don't know that Lugar had much choice. They were pressing him all the time. They all hung around the

Manila hotel. It's near the embassy and it became the main center for most of the American observer activity. I thought it was a farce, the press implication that all this observation was helping to keep the election honest. I mean, how can you observe an election like that?

Lugar's mission wasn't the only foreign group. We had sponsored and paid for another group, an international group. I think the joint Republican-Democratic political groups or whatever they are called had brought in a bunch of other foreigners, including some from not very democratic countries, like Colombia among others, to observe the fairness of the election. All of that was dross. I just think that the outcome was preordained.

My own miscalculation was: I knew that U.S. policy makers were set on getting rid of Marcos. I thought it was American policy to get rid of him and I didn't accept any other basis for American policy. The concept that we have been staunch allies of Marcos for years I think is a totally distorted one. The U.S. foreign policy establishment opposed him since his very first successful try for the presidency in 1964, and consistently opposed him thereafter. So I think, as I said earlier, that the outcome was preordained. But I see that in retrospect. I didn't think that we would go so far as to collaborate in the manipulation of his overthrow by the Catholic Church sponsored mobs in Manila and a military mutiny.

I don't know what it took to induce the defense secretary, Enrile, to defect. His reputation is not a good one in the Philippines; quite the contrary, he's considered something of a very slippery character, has been all along. He was the responsible official in the martial law period, and if there were atrocities he would have been certainly first in line for the responsibility for them before Marcos. General Ramos is a different matter. He is an old West Point graduate who worked with our forces in Korea and in Vietnam, essentially a professional soldier, pro-American certainly in his attitudes and in his manners. If the two were gotten to by us, I don't think it would have been directly. I think it would have been through Jaime Sin. After the event, I recalled something that Sin had said just three or four days before the election, something to the effect that high-ranking military officials had assured him that if Aquino won the election there would be a peaceful transition and that they would serve her just as well as anyone else. Now, Jaime Sin put that out about three or four days before the election, which suggests to me that the getting to Enrile and Ramos came through Jaime Sin. Whether we were in touch with Jaime Sin, I'll leave that to your judgment. Certainly, the ambassador saw enough of him and so did many of the official U.S. visitors.

**RITCHIE:** In addition to the congressional delegation being there, the Senate also passed a resolution declaring that they did

not believe the results of the election were accurate. Do you think that the Congress had a legitimate role in either case?

**VALEO:** No. It was a mistake for us to become involved in it. How would they know? How would they know really whether the results were accurate? How can you pass a sensible congressional resolution on a question like that? It's possible for people in the American embassy, they had observers around in different parts of the country, it's possible that they could have formed a crude estimate of the fairness of the election, but it would have been so crude, even they, knowing the country, being familiar with what was happening, watching it day to day, even any estimate that they formed would have had to be at best highly tenuous. But how can anyone suggest somehow or other that we had enough information to say within two or three days that these elections were so terribly fraudulent? Unless, of course, the information came from the Catholic church hierarchy. And, in that case, with their bitterness to Marcos, how objective would that information be?

No one that I know of has ever said that Marcos got less—under the most extraordinary conditions—than 45 percent of the vote. That would have been his percentage if you allowed every voiced claim of fraud and if you multiplied them by about four or five times he would have still wound up with about 45 percent of the vote. Well, that isn't exactly a total falling away from somebody who's been leading your country for twenty years. When you can't do a

scientific job of polling, maybe you're better off not trusting the judgment of some people who might not be entirely objective. Obviously, we chose not to do that.

When I left the Philippines, the official results still were not announced. There was a stewardess on the Philippine airlines plane and we got into a conversation. She was a young woman and she had voted in Manila. I didn't ask her who she had voted for, but she volunteered that she had voted and she asked me what I thought of the election. I gave her a reaction. She said, "I'm very disturbed. Frankly, I was for change"— (which I think was basically the character of the anti-Marcos mood) —she said, "I was for change and I voted for change, but I don't like the way they are treating the president." I think, in many ways, that is the reality of the Philippine reaction. Certainly outside of Manila that would be the case. But even inside of Manila, I believe, it would have still been substantially the case.

So I'm led to the second basic observation on this election: that we've been witness here to a journalistic lynching, aided and abetted by the Congress. It appalled me in particular that a paper like the *New York Times*, which I've read for many, many years, would be a party to the attempted destruction of Marcos' war record. Of course, they have been an enemy of Marcos for many years. This is not new with the *Times*. When he first put marshal law in effect in the early '70s, he closed down all the newspapers

including the *Manila Times*, and the editor of the *Manila Times* was highly regarded by press colleagues in the United States. I think that the press animosity to Marcos dates from that period. It's been intermittent over the years. I think the *Times* has been wrong most of the time; they've been predicting his fall for fifteen years, and it's taken fifteen years to bring it around, but they finally won their point.

I say journalistic lynching because when I began to look at the political situation and the election from the Philippines rather than from the United States I began to see that the whole U.S. press approach was taking shape in terms of a kind of morality play, a kind of struggle between good and evil. Everything that was evil was of course associated by the U.S. press with Marcos. Anything good was associated with his opponent, whether the opposition candidate was Aquino or anyone else I think it would have been the same. I don't think it had anything to do with Cory Aquino. At that point she was a total unknown, and she does not make a strong impression in any event.

I actually wrote in my notes shortly after I arrived in the Philippines that somebody was trying to shape the election into a struggle between good and evil. To do that, anything that was good that might possibly be associated with Marcos had to be suppressed, or ignored, as part of the news. Anything that was evil with which he could be linked, however remotely, had to be

played to the heights. By the same token, you reversed it for his opponent. I kept thinking in these terms, that this is the way the election was being developed by the U.S. press, and I couldn't figure out who was pulling the strings. Then finally, a week before the election, damned if Jaime Sin doesn't use the phrase: "This is an election that is going to decide between good and evil." The phrase was actually used by Jaime Sin in a public statement. He never mentioned Marcos by name, but he said it was a battle between good and evil. Well, you know, no political conflict is ever a battle between all good and all evil.

I begin to think back on my years of watching the Philippine scene. I asked myself if one were not putting it in those black and white terms, what would one find that would be good in Marcos? The first thing was that he had fed, or the country has been fed—I don't want to give him all the credit for it anymore than I want to give him all the blame—but they have managed to keep twenty-five million more people fed than were there when he took office. Well, that's no mean achievement in a country of that kind. They started out with a population of thirty-eight or thirty-nine million when he took office, and now there are fifty-eight million. I know his wife believes in family planning; I know she made one attempt to get that idea across and she was slapped down completely by precisely the person who has defined good and evil in this thing, the good archbishop of Manila.



So that's one thing, the fact that a leadership is able to manage to keep the people fed is a very important consideration in any developing country. It ties in with the land reform, which had been talked about for at least forty years before martial law and it was only possible to put it into effect after martial law was declared. The land reform law, yes you can find plenty of faults with it, but basically there are more people farming their own land, particularly on the island of Luzon, than ever in the past, and that that is so is essentially due to land reform. As I say, you can criticize the reform shortcomings just like you can criticize marking ballots with a pencil, but basically the Filipinos did it themselves and they did it reasonably well, certainly enough to keep down the level of discontent in the rural areas of Luzon for the past two decades.

Public education, there are now enough schools to take care of a population which has twenty-five more million people in it, and a very young population. I think a majority of the people in the Philippines are under eighteen years old. These are achievements that one shouldn't dismiss lightly. The country has been run, all things considered, with perhaps less bloodshed than in the past, certainly no more, and maybe less. All of those things must somehow be ignored when you personify the head of the state as a monster. Not only do you have to stage a battle between good and evil, you have to personify them. Cory Aquino comes across as

the dutiful daughter of the church, deeply religious, and Marcos comes out as some sort of monster who goes around killing people. That was not the reality. If we see the situation in those terms we're seeing it inaccurately.

**RITCHIE:** The press has focused on the wealth and corruption angle . . . .

**VALEO:** I know!

**RITCHIE:** And contrasted that to the poverty islands. Do you give any credence to this?

**VALEO:** Yes, but the wealth problem is not confined to the Marcoses. Big wealth and big poverty have been a characteristic of these islands for many, many decades, perhaps centuries. I thought the real straw was Stephen Solarz's comments on Malacanang Palace this morning, how these people lived in such extraordinary splendor. What he really should have said, again, if it were not a struggle between good and evil, was that the palace housed the Spanish governor-generals, and the American governor-generals, and has housed all of the Philippine presidents and the contrast between its splendor and the city's poverty have been there all that time! I noticed that Cory Aquino has now moved into the guest house. Well, we'll see how long she stays there. I mean, I don't find in the Macoses some unique aspect here. I don't like what I see in terms of wealth versus poverty in the Philippines,

never have. But I don't see this as some unique characteristic that has appeared during the Marcos presidency.

The Cohuanco family, which is her family, if you want to get into this sort of thing—I don't think those are the real issues, I think they are sideshows—they own vast lands in the province of Tarlac, and one of their hostilities with regard to Marcos was the land reform. They lost some land, but they still have sugar lands in this province in central Luzon. As part of their campaign, the Marcos' people brought down to Manila poor peasants from what was called the Hacienda Luicita, which was Aquino's family hacienda. They picketed her rallies, pointing out that the hacienda paid them twenty or thirty cents a day. They also complained that the land was supposed to have been divided up, according to the press reports, twenty years ago, and they never got around to doing it. I don't want to get into that because sure, I don't like to see wealth flaunted anywhere, including in the United States, but to assume that that's the critical thing I think is a sideshow. When Solarz talks about three thousand panties in her closet and things like that I found it offensive in the extreme, you know, to look in women's closets to see what kind of clothes they have is not what I regard as a normal function of politics.

**RITCHIE:** What advantage do you think the State Department saw in switching allegiances, or putting so much support to Marcos' opposition, especially right after the election?

**VALEO:** I think they've wanted to get rid of Marcos for a long time. They saw no alternative until now. Until the Beninjo Aquino assassination there was no real alternative that they could have grappled for. After the Aquino assassination and the consequences which were largely economic as well as political, I think it became evident for the first time that an opposition was going to take form in some way. I think they played with Salvatore Laurel for a while, found out that he really was probably not viable. They looked for alternatives. I don't know who put this ticket together but I think it was Jaime Sin. Then, for the first time it looked like a viable thing.

As I say, the State Department has not been particularly friendly to Marcos, ever since he's been in office. He's been far too independent in attitude and in viewpoint and far too intensely nationalist for the Americans who have had to deal with him. He's not easily controlled, and they knew that. But that happens in many places and you have to live with what you've got. On top of that, then, I think his aging was beginning to give them deep worries because they didn't know what was going to come next if he stayed in office much longer. They probably feared a succession by Mrs. Marcos whose intense nationalism would have been even more difficult to handle. One can argue whether Marcos should have left office or not at this point for the good of his country. My personal opinion is that he should not have run, he should have

let somebody else take on this election, but that's neither here nor there. The fact is, our officials felt they could no longer live with him.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think this election in a sense legitimized the opposition by at least showing they had some popular support, and gave us some reason for throwing our support to them?

**VALEO:** No. I think that a legitimate opposition had emerged in the previous elections for the legislature. We should have encouraged this process but we should not have intervened in any way shape or form in terms of favoring one candidate or another. We certainly should have not helped in the process of electing a president by military defections and manipulated mobs in Manila. This was a Manila election in many ways. Aquino was really put into office by the mobs who were gotten on the streets by the church, and by a defecting military cabal. How you can rationalize that as a victory for democracy, I just don't know.

**RITCHIE:** It was strange that the Soviets threw their support to Marcos at the end.

**VALEO:** Yes, of course. They jumped right away on it. They thought surely he was going to be the new president. There's a real irony in this. One of our problems with Marcos was that we were afraid he wasn't going to be able to fight the Communists well enough, and he wouldn't listen to us on how to fight them.

Now we've got a woman whose practically first act in office was to let four of the leading Communists in the country out of jail. I don't know what it adds up to. I don't know whether that's a good gesture or not. But if you make so much about the need to fight the Communists, especially when your military says, "Don't do it, we're fighting the Communists so don't let them out," and yet that's done, I don't know how you can put that together with our policy which presumably is designed primarily to increase the capacity of the Philippine government to control communism. I just don't understand the rationale of it. That's why I don't think "knowing how to fight Communists" was ever really relevant to our position on Marcos.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think that now we are even more committed to this government than we were before?

**VALEO:** Well, we'll know that when we get the first aid bill, which is going to be a large one. I saw an item in the press just recently that the Filipinos may default on their debts. That will send the tremors through the bankers and we'll see what it leads to in the way of a new aid program. If it's big enough, why then you'll know we're more committed than ever. And if that isn't enough we'll have to send more. And if that isn't enough I don't know how far it can go. You come back to comparisons with Vietnam, and they all frighten me.

**RITCHIE:** So you see some parallels to Vietnam in say, 1963?

**VALEO:** Yes. I see something more than that too, Don. I think—and whether this is a right assumption or not we'll know very shortly—I don't think that Cory Aquino is going to stay in office very long, or if she is she's not going to stay in power very long. I think the power is going to shift. It will go probably in the direction of Laurel and Enrile, if he lives. He's in danger of assassination, in my judgment. He's got two armored cars that go with him everywhere now, and I think properly so, because I think he's a potential target. They have long memories in the Philippines.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think that Marcos is completely out of the picture now or will he play a role in the future?

**VALEO:** It's interesting. The first indication that he was still involved came from some complaints from Laurel, that he's still in touch with his people in the Philippines. Supposedly Blas Ople, who was the minister of labor in his government, wants to form a new party. It's interesting, when it was thought that Marcos wasn't going to live a while back, the two people who jumped to the forefront were Enrile and Ople. Both were ready to take over at that point. So I don't know how much of a role Marcos is going to play from now on. I think in some ways if he finds life too impossible in the United States, and right now I

think it's touch and go, I don't think he's going to disappear. It would not surprise me if he showed up in his home province of Llocos Norte, that's not an impossibility.

**RITCHIE:** If you were still connected with the Foreign Relations Committee right now, what kind of advice would you give to them about the Philippines and the future of the Philippines?

**VALEO:** I'd say pray! I don't know what's going to come next. We've got some company in the new set up which I would prefer not to keep in the Philippines. But having done what we did, I don't know that we have any alternative if we're going to try to salvage anything but to go the same route which points in the direction of Vietnam. Now, I would say that somewhere long before you get to Vietnam you stop. The first thing I would advise the Foreign Relations Committee to do is: get the military bases out of Subic and Clark. I would say start to negotiate that immediately. That should have been done a long time ago. Or if for some overriding reason we're not going to get the bases out, then just rent them. Find out what's a fair rent for them and give them rent and stop using the bases as a reason for involving ourselves in the Philippines internal affairs. That would be my first advice. Although ideally I think we should get the bases out and move them somewhere else, I don't care where, I'm not even sure we need them, but everybody tells me they're vital, so if we really need them figure out another place away from



the Philippines to put them. There must be many places where you'd have less problems with them.

But failing that then I think the next step is the same thing that we should have done five years ago with Marcos: hold them but pay rent for them. Forget the "aid" myth and then you're out of the internal politics not only in the Philippines but in the United States as well. Then you don't have to be embarrassed by Marcos, or by Aquino, or by Laurel, or anyone else who's in that job. You just say, "Look, all we're interested in is the bases, we don't care what you do with your government. Here's your money for the bases. If you get elected or if you come into power we'll pay you too." I think one has to be that cynical—if you really need the bases. If you don't need them, just get away from them, and get away from those islands and just try to keep a decent relationship which permits you to have a measure of trade, a measure of investment if it makes sense and some mutually satisfying cultural exchange. That's all. But we're not headed in that direction now. We've got ourselves up to our ears and nose matters which should be exclusively Philippine.

**RITCHIE:** So it comes down to the fact that we have a difficulty in defining what our interests really are?

**VALEO:** Right. And we come back again to what I think is one of the strains in our society, which we talked about before,

which is the imperialist strain. We haven't shook ourselves free of that yet. By the same token, when I spoke of journalistic lynching today, I think that that's another strain in our society. When we get into a situation that we cannot come to grips with, we search for a personification of evil as the source of our perplexity. Once we have personified the evil then we must lynch it. Whatever redeeming human features the personification might have, just forget them and concentrate on the evil. That is a reality. Historically you must sense that yourself. There are other strains; but those two also exist.

What appalls me is that the press is a part of this. I never thought of the press as a stimulator of lynch mobs. I just never thought of it that way, and yet after this Philippine experience I go back to the McCarthy period and realize how much the press was involved in the making of McCarthy and his power to lynch many, many innocent people. And then in the end the press helped to lynch McCarthy. I'm sure there are many other examples. Those are the ones out of my own experience. That's really serious. It throws a real shadow on the First Amendment, and the meaning of the First Amendment.

**RITCHIE:** And here we are talking about this in the First Amendment Lounge of the National Press Club.

**VALEO:** Yes! Okay, Don, I don't know that there's anything else. That's the way the whole experience looked to me.

**RITCHIE:** Well, I appreciate this. It's a very interesting postscript. The timing was just right.

**VALEO:** Let me add one more thing. I want my own relationship with the Marcoses to be made very clear in the record. I've known them for twenty years, not as intimate friends, but I've known them and watched them as a political team. I know Mrs. Marcos' brother, who is a very dear friend of mine, has been for many years, especially since I left the Senate. I know these people. I know what I believe are their shortcomings in terms of politics, but I also know their strengths and their contributions to the Philippines. I have a fairly good idea in my own mind of what they have done that is positive in the Philippines, and what has been done that is negative. I think the positive far outweighs the panties in the closet and the thousand pair of shoes.

**RITCHIE:** Has her brother left the Philippines also?

**VALEO:** He's in Honolulu, but he's not with them. He didn't come with them. That's it, Don. I don't have anything more to say.

**RITCHIE:** Well, I thank you. It's been fascinating. This interview really went right up to the daily headlines. Normally I'm used to interviewing people twenty years after the events, not just a week or so.

**VALEO:** Well, I hope it looks good twenty years from now, but one never knows.

**End of Interview #20**