

Diplomatic Relations between the Philippines and Eastern European Socialist Bloc under President Ferdinand E. Marcos, 1965-1986

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Diplomatic communiques between the Philippines and the Eastern European Socialist bloc (EESB) found in the Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of the Philippines reveals a compendium of original data significant in tracing the inception of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the EESB i.e. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. This is a pioneering work about the beginning of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the Eastern European Socialist Bloc under the administration of President Ferdinand E. Marcos (1965 to 1986) including the establishment of formal diplomatic ties, signing of trade, cultural, scientific and visa agreement, economic implications of trade and tourism and the strengthening of cultural relations.

Keywords Philippines, socialist bloc, diplomacy, cold war, Iron Curtain East Europe



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Formal Diplomatic Relations between the Philippines and the EESB

The EESB did not have any official relations with the Philippines until after World War II. The Iron Curtain in Europe limited Philippine re-

lations with European countries, so that the Philippines focused only on relations with Western Europe.¹ From President Manuel Roxas to President Diosdado Macapagal, the idea of opening formal diplomatic relations with Communist countries was practically non-existent. This included to the EESB.²

In 1965, under Ferdinand E. Marcos' presidency, the general opinion of the people in the diplomatic and business sectors was for establishing diplomatic relations with the Socialist countries. This included the USSR and the EESB. The People's Republic of China was exempted at that time because of suspicion that it was a potential threat as it is geographically nearest to the Philippines. At the same time, the Philippine military knew that the People's Republic of China had direct links with the insurgency movement in the country, which included the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army. On the other hand, the USSR and other Socialist countries in Eastern Europe were too far to be of any direct or immediate threat to its national security.³

Several Philippine missions were sent to the USSR and EESB in 1967 and 1968. The findings showed that the opening of diplomatic linkage with Communist countries would be beneficial for the Republic of the Philippines. For a time, the government was indifferent to these suggestions. But even if the government remained uninterested, public discussions regarding Philippine foreign relations, especially in the media, showed a trend toward softening of the hardline policy against the USSR and other Communist countries.⁴

Key government officials lambasted the possible opening of diplomatic relations with Communist countries. A proposed meeting between the Filipino and Soviet diplomats during an annual Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ECAFE) meeting in Bangkok in 1967 was attacked by Congressman Salipada Pendatun (Liberal Party, Cotabato) as evidence of Philippine foreign policy's notorious instability.⁵ In the Senate chamber, protests were also pronounced. In 1968, when President Marcos suggested that the Philippines learn to co-exist with Communist China, Senator Sergio Osmeña, Jr of the Liberal Party, challenged him, claiming that peaceful co-existence was impossible and urged closer ties with the U.S.⁶ Furthermore, in December 1970, Senate President Gil Puyat, Nacionalista, organized a bi-partisan caucus of senators who warned Marcos against establishing trade

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and cultural relations without serious study and consultations with all constitutional and legal bodies.⁷

Be that as it may, Marcos, as the Chief Diplomat, considered the international and local realities that necessitated the opening of diplomatic relations with Communist nations. The initial concrete step which Marcos took to prepare for accord with the USSR was the establishment of diplomatic relations with smaller Socialist countries in Eastern Europe, selectively without fanfare.⁸

Marcos sent Executive Secretary Alejandro Melchor on a secret mission to the USSR in October 1970. On his return to the Philippines, Melchor suggested to Marcos that:

Considering the chronic need of the Philippines for technical assistance and capital, it is advantageous to establish relations with the USSR in the shortest possible time . . . As a strategy, developing relations first with the smaller Eastern European Socialist states – i.e. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and East Germany – on an experimental basis, then reach up to Moscow if the experiment is found beneficial.⁹

Secretary of Foreign Affairs Carlos P. Romulo recommended the establishment of preliminary contacts with Socialist countries, particularly Romania and Yugoslavia, first. The advantages cited in the Romulo report included: the diversification of export markets for Philippine products; importations, at reasonable terms, of capital goods from Socialist countries; and enhancements of an independent Philippine foreign policy.¹⁰

A Flurry of Diplomatic Activities

While the introduction provided a brief overview of the context that drove the Philippines to engage with Eastern Europe, this section densely approaches each of the main milestones in the normalisation of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and members of the Soviet bloc in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Foreign Policy Council chaired by Marcos immediately adopted the Romulo Report to establish diplomatic ties with Romania and Yugoslavia as a stepping stone to opening relations with others in the EESB. Following the decision, on 12 January 1972 the Department of Foreign Affairs instructed the Permanent Representatives to the UN,

Ambassador Narciso G. Reyes, to make contacts with his Romanian and Yugoslav counterparts regarding the establishment of diplomatic ties.¹¹ The charting of a new diplomatic direction toward relations with socialist countries was mentioned by Marcos in his seventh State of the Nation Address on 24 January 1972 with:

The Philippines took the fateful steps of opening diplomatic relations with two Socialist countries of Eastern Europe, namely, Romania and Yugoslavia. Depending upon the success of these initiatives – and there is no reason to doubt their success – we will study the possibility of relations with other Socialist countries of Europe as part of the widening web of intercourse with friendly countries. The opening of relations with Yugoslavia and Romania should be regarded therefore only as a first step in a worldwide rapprochement with Socialist countries.¹²

Marcos deferred the signing of diplomatic accord with the USSR and the People's Republic of China (PRC). He opened diplomatic relations with Romania as a testing ground on 28 February 1972, and with Yugoslavia on 01 March 1972. This was done through an exchange of letters from Manila. Ambassador Luis Moreno Salcedo was designated the Philippine non-resident envoy to these two countries.¹³ In turn, Romania appointed its ambassador to Japan, Nicolae Finantu, as non-resident envoy to the Philippines, while Yugoslavia designated its ambassador to Japan, Josef Smole, as a non-resident envoy to our country.¹⁴

Diplomatic relations with Romania bore fruit and in 1974, Ambassador Pacifico A. Castro presented in Bucharest, Romania – under the World Population Conference – the contents of the Philippine Policy Statement. Also, in the same year, Foreign Minister Carlos P. Romulo arrived in Romania for an official visit from 04 to 06 September. In 1975, and Leticia Ramos-Shahani presented her credentials as Philippine Ambassador to Romania. To further strengthen bilateral relations, on 09 to 13 April 1975, President Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania paid a state visit to the Philippines, which was the occasion for signing seven agreements on such varied subjects as trade, cultural matters, economic and technical cooperation, commercial exchanges, economic representation in Bucharest and Manila and the extension of visa facilities.¹⁵ The Romanian delegation included President Nicolae Ceausescu, First Lady Elena Ceausescu, Vice Prime Minister Georghe

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Oprea, Minister of Foreign Affairs George Macovescu, and Minister of Health Radu Paun.

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Likewise, Yugoslavia's diplomatic relations with the Philippines was prolific after the signing of diplomatic relations on 01 March 1972. On 06 June 1976, Yugoslav Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lazar Majsov, who was later to become President of the UN General Assembly, visited Manila.¹⁶ From 28 June until 02 July 1979 Vice President Hadilj Hodza of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia paid a state visit, resulting in the signing of a joint statement with Marcos which agreed that:

The only sound basis for maintaining international and regional peace and stability is the firm adherence by all states, in precept and practice to the principles consecrated in the Charters of the United Nations such as respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, non-interference in the internal affairs of the states, renunciation of force or threat of the use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes, equality and mutual benefit. Both countries stressed their support of the right of every nation to choose freely its political, economic and social system and to pursue the mode of development it deems best for its own people without outside interference.¹⁷

As a gesture of diplomatic respect, on 07 May 1980, Ambassador Leon Ma Guerrero represented Marcos at the funeral rites of Yugoslavian President Josip Broz Tito.

Following the signing of diplomatic accords with Romania and Yugoslavia came Marcos' instructions to Romulo to establish diplomatic ties with four EESB states: Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). To help contain the Communist and separatist insurgencies, in 1973, President Marcos opened diplomatic and trade relations with member states of the EESB with East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria.¹⁸ The logic was that if the Philippines were seen as reaching out to the international socialist bloc, reasons for insurgency at home would be reduced. Or, at the very least, some backchannels for a negotiated settlement might be explored.

On 21 September 1973, the Philippines and the GDR established formal diplomatic relations, and exchanges were immediately carried out.¹⁹ On 02 September 1977, Ambassador Leticia Ramos-Shahani

submitted her credentials to President Erich Honecker, and on 08 June 1978, Ambassador Eberhard Feisher submitted his credentials to President Marcos. Honecker officially visited the Philippines from 06-08 December 1977 and he was very warmly received by Marcos in Malacañang Palace. A joint statement was issued declaring that:

The relations between the two countries shall be based on the following principles: respect for each other's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; non-recourse to force or the threat of force in the conduct of their relations with each other; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; peaceful settlement of disputes; and respect for the principles of equality of states.²⁰

Furthermore, President Marcos and President Honecker affirmed: the full support of the peoples of Southeast Asia in their endeavour to live in an atmosphere of peace, independence, and good neighbourly cooperation. All steps serving this objective accord with the effort to implement global détente and strengthen international security.²¹

The Polish People's Republic and the Republic of the Philippines established diplomatic relations on 22 September 1973. Foreign Affairs Secretary Romulo and Polish Foreign Minister Stefan Olszowski signed a letter of agreement at the office of the Philippine Mission to the UN in New York. In November 1974, a Polish trade mission led by Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade Tadeusz Zylkowski arrived in Manila for possible trading partnership. On 22 January 1975, Ambassador Zdzislaw Regulaski presented his diplomatic credentials to Marcos, while Ambassador Rogelio de la Rosa submitted his diplomatic credentials to Chairman Stanislaw Kania. Exchanges in various fields were actively carried out. From 01 until 03 August 1980 Philippine Deputy Foreign Minister Jose Ingles met with his counterpart, Polish Vice Foreign Minister Eugeniusz Kulaga. Both of them attended the Third Armand Hammer Conference which produced the Warsaw Declaration on Peace and Human Rights.²²

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

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in Manila, while Leticia Ramos-Shahani became his counterpart in Budapest. Romulo went to Budapest on an official visit from October 30 to November 2, 1974. The first high-profile Hungarian government official to visit Manila was Deputy Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Pal Racz.²³ From November to December 1978, a Hungarian Exposition was held at the Philippine Centre for International Trade and Exposition in Manila. In April the following year, a seminar on Hungarian pharmaceutical industry and medicine research was conducted at the Philippine International Convention Centre.

Then, on 05 October 1973, the Philippines signed an agreement with Czechoslovakia for formal diplomatic relations. Secretary Romulo signed the formal accord with Foreign Minister Bohuslav Chnoupek at the Philippine Mission office in New York.²⁴ To strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries, Romulo made an official visit to Prague between 02 and 03 September 1974. Karel Houska of Czechoslovakia presented his credentials on 28 June 1977, while Rolando Garcia of the Philippines did the same in 1978. The Foreign Affairs Minister of Czechoslovakia visited the Philippines from 13 until 17 July 1979. The official visit forged an executive programme for cultural and educational cooperation and expansion of bilateral trade between the Philippines and Czechoslovakia.

A month after the diplomatic accord with Czechoslovakia, the Philippines signed a joint communique with the People's Republic of Bulgaria on 16 November 1973. Signing in behalf of the Philippines was Romulo, while his Bulgarian counterpart was Deputy Foreign Minister Guero Grozev. The joint communique was signed in the Philippine Mission office in New York. From 23 until 30 October 1974, Romulo paid an official visit to Sofia. Rumen Serbezov submitted his credentials as Ambassador of Bulgaria on 20 March 1975, while Rogelio de la Rosa did the same as Philippine Ambassador on 23 May 1975. Hristo Hristov, Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Trade, attended the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD V) held in Manila. From 13-17 July 1979 Foreign Minister Bohuslav Chnoupek was in Manila on an official visit.²⁵

Trade, Cultural, Scientific and Visa Agreements

As early as 1968, the vision of fostering diplomatic ties with Socialist countries was already lingering in the minds of various sectors of Phil-

ippine society and Marcos viewed such a move as a means to opening of new markets for Philippine products, especially since the Philippines wanted to expand its trade relations to strengthen its economy. Fervent nationalists argued that diversification was needed to end the unfavourable dependency relationship between the Philippines and the US.²⁶

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It is noteworthy that during the latter part of the 1960s, the Philippines considered the Republic of China (Taiwan) as an independent nation with whom a lucrative trading partnership could exist. The EESB should then be a more appropriate choice for trading partnership at that juncture than the PRC – if the choice had to be made – since the USSR and its bloc were not as opposed to Philippine relations to Taipei as Beijing was (and remains). Hence, the Philippines would not have had to choose between Taiwan and the PRC and could remain on good terms with all its trading partners.

The forging of diplomatic relations with Socialist countries began in earnest in 1972 when Marcos ordered the Department of Foreign Affairs to coordinate with their Romanian and Yugoslavian counterparts. In 1973, the normalisation of relations was made with Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Poland.

Marcos propounded a “New Diplomacy” when he said:

We have continued our efforts to establish mutually beneficial relations with the Socialist world. We now maintain diplomatic relations with almost all countries of Eastern Europe – East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania. Such relations have already begun to positively affect our domestic situation in terms of diversification of the markets for our products as well as of the sources of finished goods needed by our burgeoning economic development efforts.²⁷

Bulgaria

Bulgaria inked a trade agreement with the Philippines on 02 May 1975. The trade agreement was signed by Philippine Minister of Trade Troadio Quiazon Jr. and Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade Tzvetan Borisov Petkov. To strengthen direct trade and economic relations, the two countries agreed to develop and promote trade and economic relations within the framework of the agreement and of the

laws and regulations of their respective countries.²⁸ The exchange of goods would be carried out based on the prevailing world market prices with authorised Philippine import and export enterprises and Bulgarian foreign trade organisations. In the agreement, Bulgaria's list of possible exports included machinery, metal products, building materials, household appliances, chemicals and fertilisers.²⁹ The other hand, Philippines' list included copper concentrates, coconut oil, abaca, rubber, textiles, and handicraft.³⁰

A cultural agreement was signed between the two countries on 09 June 1978. The Philippines and Bulgaria had the common desire to promote and develop cultural relations among their respective peoples. A better understanding of each other's cultures was made possible through the exchange of books and periodicals, non-commercial cinematographic films, arts and cultural exhibitions, exchange professors, scholarships, physical education and sports.³¹ An accord on economic and technical cooperation was signed by Philippine Minister of Trade Troadio Quiazon Jr. and Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade Spas Georgiev on 10 May 1979. To promote economic and technical cooperation, both governments agreed to undertake feasibility studies, research and designs, and delivery and installation of plants, machinery, and equipment as well as provide technical assistance.³²

Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia established trade relations with the Philippines on 09 March 1977 with the signing of a trade agreement between Minister Troadio Quiazon Jr. and Minister of Foreign Trade Andrej Barcak. To strengthen Philippine-Czechoslovak trading ties, direct economic relation between the two countries was established on equitable and beneficial bases. The Philippines and Czechoslovakia were to promote and develop their trade and economic relations in accordance with the laws, rules and regulations effective in either country.³³ Exchanges of goods between the two countries would be affected based on the list of goods mentioned in the agreement. The goods for export from the Philippines included coconut oil, logs, Portland cement, coffee, tropical fruits, tobacco, copper, nickel, lead, and chrome.³⁴ On the other hand, goods for export from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic included textile, electrical and industrial machinery, metal and wood-

working machine tools, construction and road building machinery, and scientific and laboratory equipment.³⁵

On 08 October 1974, the Philippines and Czechoslovakia forged a cultural agreement. The agreement was signed by Romulo and Chnoupek. Both countries agreed to promote cultural collaboration on the basis of mutual respect for their sovereignty and in conformity with the laws and regulations in force in each country. Both countries were encouraged to promote better understanding of each other's customs through an exchange of books and periodicals dealing with science, art and education; non-commercial cinematographic films and recordings; art and other cultural exhibitions; exchange professors and scholars, concerts and other performances, and scholarships.³⁶ To strengthen Philippine-Czechoslovak bilateral relations, an Executive Programme of Cultural and Educational Cooperation was signed on 17 July 1979, 22 October 1981 and 02 August 1985. The Programme aimed to finance the studies of two exchange scholars at post graduate level from both the Philippines and Czechoslovakia.³⁷ Experts from each country in music, the graphic arts, literature, theatrical art, museology, care of historical monuments, protection of nature and adult education would also be exchanged.³⁸

The Philippines and Czechoslovakia also signed an agreement on 01 June 1983 for the promotion and development of scientific and technical cooperation. It included the provision of scientists, experts and technicians, equipment, instruments, accessories, and organisation of theoretical and practical training programmes.³⁹

The German Democratic Republic

The German Democratic Republic and the Republic of the Philippines signed a trade agreement through Acting Foreign Minister Jose D. Ingles of the Philippines and Minister of Foreign Affairs Oskar Fisher of East Germany on 07 December 1977. Under the agreement each country granted the other the most-favoured-nation-treatment with respect to the levy of customs duties, taxes and similar charges, and the application of rules and formalities governing customs clearance, as well as the issuance of export and import licenses.⁴⁰

The trade agreement indicated the products for export of the Philippines as coconut oil and other coconut products, coffee, tobacco leaf,

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animal feed materials, plywood, pineapple, abaca fibre, and copper.⁴¹ Likewise, the products for export by the GDR included machinery, scientific and laboratory equipment, diesel generating sets, ships, capital goods, electronic products, fertilisers, and pharmaceutical products.⁴² A cultural agreement between the two countries was signed on 06 July 1983. Under this agreement, the Philippines and the GDR agreed to promote friendly cooperation in the fields of culture, art, education, and sports on the basis of mutual respect for their sovereignty, equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, in conformity with the laws and regulations in each country, bearing in mind the interests of their respective peoples.⁴³

Hungary

Next in establishing a trade agreement with the Philippines was the Hungarian People's Republic. On 14 October 1976, Minister Quiazon and Hungarian Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade Sandor Udvardi agreed that both countries shall promote the development of trade and economic relations in accordance with the laws, rules and regulations effective in each country, and within the framework of their respective participation in the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade.⁴⁴

On 15 July 1976, a cultural agreement was forged between Secretary Carlos P. Romulo and Ambassador Ernd Horvath. It provided for exchanges of books, periodicals, recordings for television, radio broadcasting programs, artworks, professors, theatrical, and musical performances, as well as for scholarship grants.⁴⁵ In the same way, a pact on scientific and technical cooperation was signed by the Philippine Deputy Foreign Minister Manuel Collantes and Hungarian Foreign Minister Fuja Frigyes on 22 February 1980. This agreement encouraged the Philippines and Hungary to promote and develop scientific and technical cooperation in the fields in which the two countries were interested on the basis of the principle of mutual advantage. The scientific and technical cooperation consisted of exchange of experts and technicians for study, grant of fellowships, provision of scientific data, exchange of delegations for short visits and joint technical studies in industry and agriculture.⁴⁶ In addition to these agreements, an exchange of notes regarding the holders of diplomatic and service or official passports of the Philippines and Hungary was signed in Budapest on 07 July 1994.⁴⁷

Poland

Of all the countries belonging to the EESB, Poland was the only one to forge a full diplomatic and trading relationship with the Philippines. On 12 February 1976, the Philippine government represented by Minister of Trade Troadio T. Quiazon Jr and the government of the Polish People's Republic represented by Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade Tadeusz Zylkowski signed a trade accord. The agreement provided that both countries accord to each other the most-favoured-nation treatment with regard to custom duties and charges of any kind, rules and formalities connected with customs clearances and internal taxes on imported and exported goods, and the issuance of import and export licenses.⁴⁸

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Romania

Romania entered into a trade partnership with the Philippines on 13 April 1975 with Marcos and Ceausescu signing on behalf of their respective countries. The two countries agreed to promote the expansion of trade and economic relations with regard to their respective international rights and duties, taking into account the importance of more favourable conditions of access for their national products to each other's market.⁴⁹ The list of Romanian products for export to the Philippines included electric motors, transformers, generators, oil drilling equipment, irrigation equipment, food industry equipment, and compressors.⁵⁰ Among the Philippine products listed for export to Romania were processed food products, shrimps, prawns, fresh fruits, fish, canned tuna, pineapple juice, beer, rum, and tobacco.⁵¹ A Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Science and Technology of the Philippines and the Mining Research and Technology of Romania on cooperation in science and technology undertakings was also signed in Manila on 22 August 1994.⁵² In the same manner, an agreement relating to the waiver of visa requirements for holders of ordinary passports and abolition of visa fees in certain cases was signed in Manila on 12 April 1975.⁵³

Yugoslavia

Finally, Yugoslavia entered into a trade agreement with the Philippines when Minister of Trade and Industry Roberto Ongpin signed a trade

accord with the Federal Secretary for Foreign Trade Milenko Bojanic on 07 June 1983 in Belgrade. This agreement directed the Philippines and Yugoslavia to promote direct trade and economic relations, and espouse the expansion of bilateral trade within the framework of the laws and regulations effective in their respective countries.⁵⁴

A cultural agreement was likewise made between the Philippines and Yugoslavia on 14 September 1977 with the purpose of improving cultural ties through an exchange of books, films and artworks, as well as through cultural exhibitions, scholarship grants and sports.⁵⁵ On 30 August 1982, a pact on scientific and technical cooperation was forged between the Philippines and Yugoslavia, Romulo and Miodrag Trajkovic signed for their countries. The treaty provided for an exchange of experts and professors, scholarship grants, aid in the preparation of feasibility studies, the training of technical staff, exchange of documentation, and other related forms of cooperation.⁵⁶ On 09 March 1973, an exchange of notes for the abolition of non-immigrant visa requirements for the citizens of the Philippines and Yugoslavia was signed in Manila.⁵⁷

As the above section demonstrated through the deployment of empirical data, the 1970's was a decade of intense start-ups in the relationship between the Philippines and an assortment of East European countries situated in the Socialist bloc. The next section seeks to show some of the implications of the momentum created over the course of that decade.

Economic Implications in Trade and Tourism

The Philippines' forging of diplomatic and trading relationships with the EESB was a milestone in the country's search for a market for its products. The opening of the diplomatic and trade relations with the Eastern European countries bolstered efforts to establish diplomatic ties with the USSR and, by extension, the PRC. The foreign policy of Marcos proved effective in dealing with smaller Eastern European countries first. It took the form of an active search for new friends and markets among the Socialist countries in Eastern Europe.⁵⁸

In terms of bilateral relations, Marcos' Administration sought to mobilise the Philippines' diplomatic posts among the EESB for the promotion of trade and tourism. In fact, *Trade Promotion Units* were created in each of these posts headed by a Philippine ambassador or consul

general.⁵⁹ This proved to be an effective diplomatic move. According to Deputy Foreign Minister Manuel Collantes:

The trade promotion units later assumed expanded roles such as encouraging investment and tourism in the country and sourcing out placement for our skilled manpower . . . with this setup, our officers became more responsive to national development programmes.⁶⁰

Tables 1 to 3 present the development of the Philippine trade with Eastern Europe from 1971 to 1975.

*Table 1.
Trends in Philippine-EESB
Trade from
1971 to 1975 (in
US dollars)*

	Imports from the EESB				
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Bulgaria	x	x	x	28,742	28,765
Czechoslovakia	x	88,888	75,507	777,645	1,047,161
East Germany	x	x	x	2,235	6,605
Hungary	x	1,123	37,177	29,395	61,169
Poland	x	x	113,868	4,209,522	71,978
Romania	x	x	333,220	519,095	4,601,514
Yugoslavia	x	8,176	60,481	9,622,945	4,726,822

	Exports to the EESB				
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Bulgaria	x	x	2,720	x	18,417
Czechoslovakia	x	x	x	100	x

continues →

← *continues*

East Germany	x	x	x	x	x
Hungary	x	x	x	x	x
Poland	x	x	x	x	118,430
Romania	x	x	x	x	15,738
Yugoslavia	105,000	x	49,287	116,766	380,741

	Total Trade				
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Bulgaria	x	x	2,720	28,742	47,182
Czechoslovakia	x	88,888	76,507	777,715	1,047,161
East Germany	x	x	x	2,235	6,605
Hungary	x	1,123	37,177	29,395	61,169
Poland	x	x	113,868	4,209,522	190,408
Romania	x	x	333,220	519,095	4,617,252
Yugoslavia	105,000	8,176	109,768	9,739,711	5,107,563

	Balance of Trade				
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Bulgaria	x	x	2,720+	28,742-	10,348-
Czechoslovakia	x	88,999-	76,507-	777,545-	1,047,161-

continues →

← *continues*

East Germany	x	x	x	2,235-	6,605-
Hungary	x	1,123-	37,177-	29,395-	61,169-
Poland	x	x	113,868-	4,209,522-	46,452+
Romania	x	x	333,220-	519,095-	4,585,776-
Yugoslavia	105,000+	8,176-	11,194-	9,506,179-	4,346,081-

Source: Collated from the Central Bank Statistical Bulletin and Philippine Statistical Yearbook 1975, 1976, 1984, 1985 and 1986.

*Table 2.
Trends in Philippine-EESB
Trade from
1976 to 1979
(in US dollars)*

	Imports from the EESB			
	1976	1977	1978	1979
Romania	6,024,000	1,518,000	237,000	14,282,000
Others	4,494,000	2,348,000	5,506,000	9,604,000

	Exports to the EESB			
	1976	1977	1978	1979
Romania	13,656,000	5,882,000	x	7,711,000
Others	5,631,000	5,797,000	1,805,000	1,264,000

	Total Trade			
	1976	1977	1978	1979
Romania	19,680,000	7,400,000	237,000	21,993,000
Others	10,125,000	8,145,000	7,311,000	10,868,000

	Balance of Trade			
	1976	1977	1978	1979
Romania	7,632,000+	4,364,000+	237,000-	6,571,000-
Others	1,137,000+	3,449,000+	3,701,000-	8,340,000-

Source: Collated from the Central Bank Statistical Bulletin and Philippine Statistical Yearbook 1975, 1976, 1984, 1985 and 1986.

*Table 3.
Trends in Phil-
ippine-EESB
Trade from
1980 to 1984
(in US dollars)*

	Imports from the EESB				
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Bulgaria	1,147,648	1,337,123	2,257,630	3,579,155	304
Czecho- slovakia	2,953,996	2,254,892	3,126,216	4,921,815	1,472,243
East Germany	4,521,088	5,184,602	2,180,384	2,689,528	432,877
Hungary	150,629	657,775	629,976	229,923	85,483

continues →

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Poland	5,496,907	2,012,549	1,771,454	1,427,469	1,438,772
Romania	2,036,871	2,479,072	4,810,336	1,725,405	3,534,490
Yugoslavia	54,244	284,805	227,444	2,149,531	443,618

	Exports to the EESB				
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Bulgaria	x	82,467	733,555	2,415,763	167
Czecho- slovakia	x	219,957	497,005	54,182	45,480
East Germany	4,743,284	299,437	x	488,816	87,553
Hungary	15,750	226,682	2,892,889	1,145,721	127,546
Poland	3,695,230	375,718	535,872	570,498	418,771
Romania	4,175,650	5,938	50,000	x	100
Yugoslavia	4,203,792	3,828,866	380,507	43,403	12,181

	Total Trade				
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Bulgaria	1,147,648	1,419,590	2,991,185	5,994,918	471
Czechoslovakia	2,953,996	2,474,849	3,623,221	4,975,997	1,517,723
East Germany	9,264,372	5,484,039	2,1880,384	3,178,344	520,430
Hungary	166,379	884,457	3,522,865	1,375,644	213,029

continues →

Poland	9,192,137	2,388,267	2,307,326	1,997,967	1,857,542
Romania	6,212,521	2,485,010	4,860,336	1,725,405	3,534,590
Yugoslavia	4,258,036	4,113,671	607,951	2,192,934	455,799

	Balance of Trade				
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Bulgaria	1,147,648-	1,254,656-	1,524,075-	1,163,392-	137-
Czechoslovakia	2,953,996-	2,034,935-	2,692,211-	4,867,633-	1,426,763-
East Germany	222,196+	4,885,165-	2,180,384-	2,200,712-	345,324-
Hungary	134,879-	431,093-	2,262,913+	915,798+	42,063+
Poland	1,801,677-	1,636,831-	1,235,582-	856,971-	1,020,000-
Romania	2,138,779+	2,473,134-	4,760,336-	1,725,405-	3,534,390-
Yugoslavia	4,149,548+	3,544,061+	153,063+	2,106,128-	431,437-

Source: Collated from the Central Bank Statistical Bulletin and Philippine Statistical Yearbook 1975, 1976, 1984, 1985 and 1986.

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

European countries exported tractors, machinery, equipment and other industrial products to our country, while we exported coconut oil, minerals and other agricultural products.

Philippine exports to the EESB, from 1972 to 1982, is shown in Table 4.

*Table 4.
Philippine
Exports to
the EESB
(1972 - 1982)
by Commodity
(in US dollars)*

<i>Products</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>Yugoslavia</i>	<i>G.D.R.</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>Bulgaria</i>	<i>Czech.</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Primary</i>								
<i>Copper</i>	10,262,200	16,442,800	299,400	x	x	x	x	27,004,400
<i>Sawlogs, Venfer Logs</i>	x	x	x	x	236,400	x	x	236,400
<i>Chromium</i>	x	1,200,600	x	x	5,500	x	x	1,206,100
<i>Abaca</i>	312,000	129,000	x	554,400	x	x	x	995,400
<i>Gold</i>	1,004,100	1,856,000	x	x	118,700	219,900	67,600	3,266,300
<i>Buntal Fiber</i>	x	x	800	x	x	x	x	800
<i>Vegetable</i>	x	200	x	x	x	x	37,600	37,800
<i>Tobacco</i>	x	x	x	x	x	3,200	x	3,200
<i>Centrifugal Sugar</i>	25,682,000	x	4,743,200	1,271,500	x	x	x	31,696,700
<i>Copra</i>	x	x	3,049,600	x	x	x	15,700	3,065,300
<i>Coconut oil, crude</i>	x	x	x	371,700	314,200	669,400	x	1,355,300
<i>Non-conif- erous wood</i>	x	1,606,000	4,789,300	x	x	x	x	6,395,300
<i>Fruits and Vegetables</i>	x	x	700	10,800	x	x	430,000	441,500

continues →

← continues

<i>Semi-Manufactured</i>								
<i>Abaca Rope</i>	x	x	x	56,100	347,500	x	69,500	473,100
<i>Veneer Sheets</i>	x	x	x	55,300	348,200	x	x	348,200
<i>Silver</i>	4,413,200	4,424,400	x	x	x	123,100	x	8,960,700
<i>Chlorites Hypochlorites</i>	x	x	x	123,800	321,700	x	x	445,500
<i>Ferro-Manganese</i>	2,614,400	12,100	178,300	x	x	38,600	x	2,843,400
<i>Manufactured</i>								
<i>Desiccated Coconut</i>	x	1,378,300	722,400	593,500	231,400	961,100	x	3,886,700
<i>Refined Petroleum</i>	114,100	318,500	x	367,100	132,600	x	129,500	1,061,800
<i>Petrol. Prod. For Int'l</i>	1,228,200	x	x	739,800	x	x	x	1,968,000
<i>Household Wood</i>	x	158,100	x	x	161,300	x	x	319,400
<i>Films</i>	x	x	237,200	455,800	x	x		693,000
<i>Basket Work</i>	x	x	8,900	x	x	x	x	8,900
<i>Samples</i>	x	x	x	x		1,300	11,612	12,192
<i>Articles</i>	x	x	x	500	23,600	x	x	24,100
<i>Personal Effects</i>	13,700	1,200	x	4,500	13,500	700	x	33,600
<i>Replacements</i>	x	x	x	59,100	x	x	x	59,100
<i>Dresses</i>	7,900	6,300	2,647,300	x	x	186,400	x	2,847,900
<i>Coffee</i>	x	x	1,021,900	x	x	123,100	x	1,145,000
<i>Total Export</i>	45,651,800	27,533,500	17,699,000	4,664,900	2,254,600	2,326,800	761,512	100,892,112

Source: Central Bank Statistics, Annual Report for the year 1982.

Primary, semi-manufactured, and manufactured products were the main export of the Philippines to the EESB from 1972 to 1982. The top ten export of the Philippines to the EESB include centrifugal sugar, copper, silver, non-coniferous wood, desiccated coconut, gold, copra, dresses, ferro-manganese, and petroleum products for international delivery. Other substantial export of the Philippines include coconut oil, chromium, coffee, refined petroleum product, abaca, cinematograph films, chlorites, cordage, fruits and vegetables and others.

Romania remains the Philippines top export destination with \$45,651,800. Other export destinations in Eastern Europe were Yugoslavia, \$27,533,500; German Democratic Republic, \$17,699,000; Poland, \$4,664,900; Czechoslovakia, \$2,325,800; Bulgaria, \$2,254,600 and Hungary, \$761,512. The total export of the Philippines to the EESB was \$100,892,112.

Tourism gained significantly for the Philippines. Table 5 shows the distribution of visitors from Eastern Europe.

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Table 5.
Eastern Europe Distribution of Foreign Visitor Arrivals by Country of Residence and Mode of Travel

	1980			1981			1982			1983		
	Air	Sea	Tot.	Air	Sea	Tot.	Air	Sea	Tot.	Air	Sea	Tot.
Poland	179	0	179	116	1	117	70	0	70	76	1	77
Yugoslavia	493	19	512	220	7	227	407	14	421	309	2	311

	1984			1985			1986			1987		
	Air	Sea	Tot.	Air	Sea	Tot.	Air	Sea	Tot.	Air	Sea	Tot.
Poland	69	18	87	50	3	53	76	0	76	86	82	168
Yugoslavia	167	23	190	153	1	154	260	95	355	160	39	199

Source: Culled from the Distribution of Foreign Visitor Arrivals by Country of Residence and Mode of Travel, Planning Service Division, Ministry of Tourism.

Of the Eastern European visitors, those from Poland and Yugoslavia increased in number from 1980 to 1987. No record was available in the Department of Tourism on visitors from the other Eastern European countries. Indeed, the opening of diplomatic relations with socialist countries opened windows of opportunities for the Philippines. Trade, tourism, cultural, and scientific and technical cooperation were promoted vigorously.

Strengthening Cultural Relations between the Philippines and the EESB

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Cultural exchanges proliferated between the Philippines and the states of the EESB. Since the signing of diplomatic agreements in the 1970's, various cultural performances were staged in the Philippines by Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. Romania sent its finest violinists, Petru Csaba – the first Romanian concert artist to set foot on Philippine soil on 12 December 1977 – and Lenuta Ciulei on 06 December 1982.⁶¹ Romanian conductors, Ilarion Ionesu-Galati and Christian Brancussi, visited the country on 10 November 1980 and 30 April 1984, respectively. Romanian opera singers performed in the CCP Main Theatre, among them, Dan Iordachescu on 19 November 1979, Nelly Miricioiu on 29 September 1980, Luminita Dumitrescu on 10 September 1981, Mihaela Agachi on 16 February 1982, and Eleonora Enachescu on 07 November 1983.⁶²

Hungary participated in the cultural exchange with the performance of the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble under the direction of Zoltan Vereb on 03 September 1977.⁶³ Hungarian musicians also performed in the country like pianists Bela Siki in 1978, 1981 and 1983 and Gyorgy Sandor on 19 June 1981. The greatest Hungarian conductor, Gyorgy Gulyas also performed on 25 April 1982. Czechoslovak musicians Bozena Steinerova, a pianist, staged a performance on 16 October 1979 and Vladimir Mikulka, guitarist performed on 20 March 1982. Slovak Folklore Artistic Ensemble, composed of five Czechoslovak musicians namely, Jan Berky-Mrenica, Ondrej Kurucz, Bertok Alexander, Alojz Rigo and Juraj Helcmanovsky rendered their local music to Filipino audiences on 18 October 1982. The Zilina Black Theater, the first professional puppet theatre in Czechoslovakia entertained Filipino audiences on 01 February 1986.⁶⁴ The GDR also had their share of cultural performances in the Philippines. Horst Forster, the country's leading conductor, visited the Philippines on 19 November 1979 and Werner Taube, soloist cellist, performed on 24 September 1980.⁶⁵ And, a top pianist from Poland rendered outstanding performances. Ruth Slenczynska, known as 'the First Lady of the Piano,' was in Manila on 05 March 1980. Mona Golabek, who won the Chopin International Competition in Warsaw in 1970, performed in the Philippines on 06 June 1981.⁶⁶ Pawel Checinski, another Polish pianist rendered a performance on 05 March 1982 at the Cultural Centre of the Philippines.

Bulgaria also made its presence felt in the Philippines by staging a performance of Youlia Radounova, a dramatic soprano on 18 September 1981. To expose the Filipinos to local music and dance performances, the Pirin Folk and Dance State Company (Blagoevgrad), a music and dance cultural group performed on 04 October 1981 at the Cultural Centre of the Philippines.⁶⁷ Suzanna Eugeni Klintcharova, a harpist, came to the Philippines on 20 February 1984 and again on 01 December 1985. Yugoslavia sent its finest ballet dancer, Dinko Bogdanic, member of the Ballet Theatre Company of Zagreb, on 19 March 1982.

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

Given the above activities that followed from the diplomatic overtures in the 1970's it is clear that there was a convergence of interests between the Philippines and the EESB states to engage in regions beyond their traditional spheres. The spate of activities must also be understood in the context of a general return to Cold War thinking in both Moscow and Washington as détente fell apart in 1979 with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Perhaps it was due to such confusing times, or that the Helsinki Final Act (1975) created the impetus for dialogues and budding civil societies in and among the EESB, that there was space for the creation and warming of relations between the Philippines and the EESB in the 1970's and 1980's. But even this is part guess and part reflection.

Conclusion

As early as 1972, the Philippines had been contacting Romanian and Yugoslav representatives in the UN for possible diplomatic ties. Prior to the opening of formal ties with the USSR and the PRC, Marcos wanted to test the waters. An exchange of letters was initiated to open diplomatic ties with Romania and Yugoslavia. The result was favourable and trade and cultural relations were formed between the Philippines and these countries. In 1973, other nations belonging to EESB followed suit,

the Philippines initiating the move to have official diplomatic relations. The German Democratic Republic, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria inked official agreements with the Republic of the Philippines in 1973.

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Trade relations increased tremendously from 1971 to 1984. However, the balance of trade was favourable to the EESB. This was primarily because these countries exported machinery, tractors, heavy capital equipment and industrial products, while Philippine exports consisted mostly of raw minerals and agricultural products. Tourism would not be substantially affected; Polish and Yugoslavian tourists were the only ones mentioned in the Department of Tourism records. In terms of cultural relations, exchanges of books, periodicals, non-commercial cinematographic films, arts, cultural exhibitions, professors, scholarships, physical education and sports provided greater awareness and understanding of the varied cultures of the Philippines and EESB. Scientific and technological exchanges exposed Philippine scientists and technicians to scientific and technological advances in the various Eastern European states.

All told, Marcos' policy of opening diplomatic ties with Socialist countries enhanced the economic and socio-cultural aspects of Philippine national life. This was done in a flexible, pragmatic and development-oriented manner. Among Filipino presidents, no one dared and succeeded in forging diplomatic ties with Communist countries except Marcos. Indeed, Marcos steered Philippine foreign policy from its traditional thrust to one of pragmatism in the face of the realities of the time. He accomplished this by inking diplomatic agreements with EESB: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. In other words, Marcos' diplomatic coup helped recast the Philippines national direction into the future.



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Notes

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