

Iran then. . . the Philippines now

by Gail G. Kay

A “second Iran” in the Philippines? Many of the same faces and institutions that orchestrated the Khomeini revolution through official U.S. government and private channels have reemerged since the Aug. 21, 1983 assassination of Philippines opposition leader Benigno Aquino to lead the assault on the Marcos government. The Iran story was told in part in *Hostage to Khomeini* (New Benjamin Franklin House, 1980); the full Philippines story has yet to be told. Among the perpetrators:

Ramsey Clark, U.S. attorney general at the Johnson White House (1967-69), was Jimmy Carter’s special envoy to Iran overseeing quasi-official links to the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini. In the closing days of the transitional government of Shahpour Bakhtiar, Clark shuttled between Teheran and Khomeini’s exile home in Paris. Clark marched through Teheran under banners reading “Death to America” and demanding the overthrow of Bakhtiar’s regime. He issued a joint statement with the Ayatollah from Paris: “The Ayatollah Khomeini and I hope that the American people and President Carter will respect our wishes, and that the United States will not interfere through the army, through American advisers, the CIA, or through support for Bakhtiar, and let the nation determine its own fate.”

Once the Ayatollah was in power, Clark and Professors **Richard Falk** and **Norman Forer** ran the U.N. Commission of Inquiry into U.S. “crimes” in the Shah’s Iran. In summer 1980, Clark went to Teheran again where he consorted with the same Iranian leaders who had seized the U.S. embassy and held 53 Americans hostage. He was not arrested upon his return to the United States.

Clark’s operations against the Philippines date back to 1977 when he organized a “counter-conference” against the Marcos government at a meeting of the World Peace Through Law congress. Clark’s group launched an investigation focusing on the “war crimes of President and Mrs. Marcos.” Since then, he has been working with Henderson Alvarez, the President of the Ninoy Aquino Movement, to bring about “change . . . so that the people of the Philippines can decide their own destiny.” This is the same formulation Clark used as Special Envoy to Teheran under Carter’s State Department case officer, Warren Christopher.

Ramsey Clark’s Fund for New Priorities hosted a banquet in February 1984 for visiting Philippines opposition leader Salvador Laurel in New York, where Clark told the 500-person audience: “We must free the Philippine people from the geopolitical and economic domination of these United States . . . and end all foreign loans and military grants. We must not give the Philippine people guns to point at their own throats.”

Richard Falk, a Princeton University professor, is a close collaborator of **Walden Bello**, head of the Congressional Liaison Committee of the Philippines Support Group, and **José Diokno**, head of the Anti-Base Coalition in the Philippines. Falk, an Amnesty International adviser like Ramsey Clark, led the assault on Iran’s nuclear development program through his U.S. People’s Committee on Iran. In 1980 Falk said: “Ramsey Clark and I spoke to many people and made the case that nuclear technology in an undeveloped country will have to involve police methods just by the nature of the thing.” In October 1983, Falk led a delegation of antinuclear—and in some cases outright terrorist—groups, for the first-ever nongovernmental international conference against foreign military bases. The conference, hosted by José Diokno, issued a declaration denouncing the “U.S.-Marcos economic and military dictatorship.”

William Sullivan, former U.S. ambassador to Manila (1973-77) and to Teheran (1977-79), is now president of the American Assembly, a think tank founded and funded by Democratic Party grey eminence Averell Harriman. As ambassador to Teheran, Sullivan was on the inside of the Carter administration’s covert contacts with the opposition to the Shah. Starting with his article, “Living Without Marcos,” in the Winter 1984 issue of *Foreign Policy*, and continuing with his late February testimony before the Solarz Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Sullivan has called for the Reagan administration to seek “alternatives” to Marcos, along the lines of a “transitional” government that would include the likes of opposition leader Salvador Laurel, elements of the military and the IMF technocrats in Manila. One of Sullivan’s goals is to force President Reagan to give his personal imprimatur to the destabilization of Marcos.

According to *Hostage to Khomeini*, “Without the **British Broadcasting Corporation**, there would have been no Khomeini.” Throughout 1978, the BBC had dozens of “correspondents,” many of them stringers for Ayatollah Khomeini, stationed around the country. Within hours of a minor incident in some remote Iranian village, BBC Persian-language broadcasts would beam reports of mass unrest across the country. Starting in December 1978, BBC filled Iranian airwaves with the diatribes of Ayatollah Khomeini. In early January 1984, New York’s educational channel aired a two-year-old BBC production on the Philippines, lauding the guerrillas of the New Peoples Army as the most credible leadership force against the “U.S.-Marcos dictatorship.” The moderator was José Diokno.