

254. National Security Study Memorandum No. 155¹

Washington, June 28, 1972.

TO

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy Toward the Philippines

The President has directed that a review of U.S. policies toward the Republic of the Philippines be made. The study should identify basic U.S. interests in the Philippines. It should examine the implications of the present situation in the Philippines for basic U.S. interests, and the consequent U.S. objectives in furthering those interests over the next five years. Lastly, it should delineate and examine the policy options open to the U.S. over this period.

The study should analyze factors and trends affecting U.S. interests and include consideration of:

—The political ambitions and intentions of President Marcos and opposition groups.

—The growth of Philippine nationalism, its manifestations in the Constitutional Convention, and its likely effects on U.S. military base agreements, investment and trade.

—The political role of the Philippine Armed Forces.

—Philippine perception of and reaction to the Nixon Doctrine and to U.S. policy toward the PRC, Japan and other nations of East and South East Asia.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 365, Subject Files, National Security Study Memoranda, Nos. 104–206. Secret.

—The economic situation in the Philippines.

The study should include consideration of the following policy issues and their interrelationship as they affect U.S. interests and objectives:

—Continued access to U.S. military bases in the Philippines. (In this connection, what should be the relationship to continued base access of (a) U.S. military assistance, and (b) the continuation of the preferential provisions of the Laurel–Langley Agreement?)

—Continued liberal access to the Philippine market for U.S. traders and investors, and reasonable protection for existing U.S. private investment in the Philippines.

—Particularly in relation to the foregoing two issues, (a) to what extent should we preserve our “special relationship” to the Philippines; and (b) should the U.S. take a position as regards the Constitutional Convention and the development of a new Constitution?

—U.S. role as regards:

—Philippine efforts to maintain internal stability and a satisfactory level of economic development. (As regards internal stability, what should be the U.S. role vis-à-vis Philippine internal security policy and operations? As regards economic development, what should be the U.S. role vis-à-vis external aid and economic development, what should be the scale and direction of our aid programs, and what should be the areas reserved for multilateral programs?)

—Philippine efforts to play a constructive regional role in Asia.

—As it relates in particular to the foregoing issues, how far should we go in limiting our identification with the present administration and its policies?

The study should be prepared by the NSC Interdepartmental Group for East Asia, and should be submitted not later than July 31, 1972 for consideration by the Senior Review Group.²

Henry A. Kissinger

² The Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs completed its first draft of working papers in response to NSSM 155 on July 28, and the Embassy provided its input in telegram 7578 from Manila, August 15. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 1 PHIL–US) The Senior Review Group met on December 1 to discuss NSSM 155. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H–113, SRG Minutes, Originals, Philippines, Dec. 1, 1972) NSSM 155 resulted in NSDM 209, “U.S. Policy Towards the Philippines,” March 27, 1973, and will be covered in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. E–12.