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25th Anniversary of the Republic of the Philippines

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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July 6, 1971

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

Mr. President:

Twenty-five years ago this month, on July 4, 1946, the United States withdrew its sovereignty from the Philippine Islands and a new nation was launched in Southeast Asia.

The new Republic of the Philippines that emerged that day has flourished and grown over the intervening quarter century. The process has of course not been without difficulties. On the whole, however, the government in Manila has remained stable and the economy has expanded at a notable rate. In recent years, moreover, there have been significant social advances, notably in education.

A few statistics tell the story graphically. Gross National Product has increased by 109% since 1947. Total foreign trade has increased by 177% and trade with countries other than the United States has increased by 659%. After decades of rice-shortages, the Philippines is now an exporter of rice. In the past five and a half years, alone, the number of school rooms has doubled and the children in attendance has increased by 7 million.

Nevertheless, the situation as regards the livelihood of the Filipino people leaves much to be desired, as the President of the Philippines and other political leaders have recognized. The growth and expansion have come in the face of a great carry-over of social inequities, some of which go back decades and even centuries. One major consequence is a severe strain on the political and governmental structure that was patterned largely on that of the United States and which was promulgated in the pre-

independence period. There has been a long felt need for change in many of the basic institutions as not adequately responsive to the needs of the Filipino people at a time of mounting pressure for social reform. The President of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos, the only re-elected President in Philippines history, has been one of the most eloquent articulators of this sentiment.

It is against this background that the Philippine Republic is now holding a national constitutional convention. The newly elected President of the Convention is Diosdado Macapagal, who served as President of the Philippines from 1962 to 1966. He was elected to head the convention after the untimely death of Carlos P. Garcia, another former President who had been elected to head the convention only last month.

Mr. President, the Journal of Commerce of New York issued on June 1, 1971, a very comprehensive special edition devoted to an Economic Review of the Philippines, especially keyed to the 25th Anniversary of the Republic. I commend the issue to the attention of the Senate and ask that there be included therefrom an article by former President Diosdado Macapagal. In addition, I ask unanimous consent that an interview which was conducted last month by Kingsbury Smith, Chief Foreign Editor of the Hearst Newspapers, with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos also be included in the Record. It details some of the exceptional achievements in the Philippines, many of which have been recorded in large part during the half-decade of his incumbency.