

When the Philippines Declared War on the United States: Laurel and Proclamation No. 30

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ABSTRACT

President Jose P. Laurel stands as the only president of the Philippines to declare a state of war on the greatest power on earth. On 22 September 1944, a day after the massive American bombardment of Manila signaling the return of the Americans to the Philippines, President Laurel issued Proclamation No. 30, declaring that a state of war exists between the Philippines and the United States. Examination of the document and Laurel's action proved that the proclamation had no legal and binding effect. Only the legislature can declare a state of war and such declaration should be ratified by the same body. By the time the Japanese realized this serious legal impediment, it was too late. Laurel had already

declared martial law and the National Assembly was disbanded. Yet, this declaration did not escape the Americans. General Douglas MacArthur once said if he had his way, he would have Laurel hanged. He also said that Laurel should be thankful to him for not having Laurel tried along with Prime Minister Hideki Tojo and other Class A war criminals. On the other hand, Laurel said that there was patriotism in collaboration. It depended on how it was given. The collaboration he gave was to save the nation. The collaboration issue was the fault of the United States which failed to grant adequate protection to the Philippines. If General Wainwright did not surrender to the Japanese, there would be no Executive Commission, no puppet Republic, and therefore, no collaboration.

KEYWORDS

Proclamation No. 30, declaration of state of war, collaboration, conscription

INTRODUCTION

A declaration of war against the United States and Great Britain was one of the demands of the Imperial Japanese government on any country occupied by these countries during the Second World War. Such declaration was given after it was accorded its independence. Siam under Phbun declared war on the United States and Great Britain on 25 January 1942, so did Manchukuo under Emperor Pu-Yi. Siam's neighbor Burma under Ba Maw

declared war on the United States and Britain Burma on 1 August 1943. It was expected that the Philippines would follow. The Japanese were planning to give the Philippines “the honor of independence” once it showed some degree of cooperation.¹

On 20 September 1943, Jose P. Laurel was elected president of the future Republic of the Philippines. On October 1, Laurel along with Speaker Benigno S. Aquino, Sr. and Jorge B. Vargas flew to Japan to thank the Japanese officials on the impending independence of the Philippines. The following day, these Filipino officials met with Prime Minister Hideki Tojo. During that meeting, the Prime Minister proposed that once the Philippines was declared independent, it should declare war on the United States and Great Britain. Laurel was shocked by the demand.

Previous to the demand for a declaration of war, the Japanese levied demands on the Filipino officials. Right after the formation of the Philippine Executive Commission, Filipino collaborators were under heavy Japanese pressure to extend collaboration to them and this collaboration must be full and unconditional. Their first demand was that Filipino officials should swear allegiance to Japan. The Japanese said that they should do this because American sovereignty had ended and there was nothing to fear from the United States.

Filipino officials like Jose P. Laurel and Jorge B. Vargas were earlier warned by General Douglas MacArthur not to swear allegiance to the Japanese. President Quezon, before his departure from Corregidor, instructed the officials he

left behind to do everything to alleviate the suffering of the people but not to swear allegiance to Japan. MacArthur threatened that those who swore allegiance to Japan will be “shot when they return.”²

Vargas, however, was knowledgeable with international law and told the Japanese representative that people and officials of an occupied country need not swear allegiance to their occupying power. Yet, the Japanese still insisted on this demand. Vargas found a compromise by allowing themselves to swear loyalty to Japanese officials but not necessarily to the occupying power.³

THE DEMAND FOR A DECLARATION OF WAR

Filipino officials were already aware that if they seek concessions from the Japanese, the Japanese would seek something in return. When they were contemplating on what kind of government they would create under the Japanese and up to what extent would be their collaboration with them, Secretary Quintin Paredes proposed that the Filipinos demand independence from the Japanese as a condition for cooperation.

Paredes was cautioned by Jorge Bocobo to refrain from making that demand, saying that Japan would turn territories that it supposedly granted independence into puppet governments. He cited the Chinese Republic under Wang Ching Wei and the Empire of Manchukuo.

When Prime Minister Tojo mentioned the demand for a declaration of war, Laurel at first did not know what to

say. Recovering his composure, Laurel courteously said that he could not comply with the request because the people would never approve such declaration. A declaration of war would polarize the Filipinos, one side favoring war with the United States and another side opposing war with the Americans and the Allies. Laurel later wrote, "To declare war against a former benefactor and ally like the United States would shock the Filipinos and only unworthy people would do that."⁴

PACT OF ALLIANCE

The Japanese did not push Laurel too hard and decided to be patient. But knowing that the Japanese will make more demands, as soon as the Philippine Republic was inaugurated on 14 October 1943, Laurel presented a Pact of Alliance to the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Pact was crafted by Foreign Minister Claro M. Recto and it covered economic, political, and military cooperation with Japan. It provided for the respect of each other's sovereignty and territory and mutual consultation. Under the military aspect, the Philippines promised to provide all kinds of facilities for military actions needed by Japan.

The presentation of the Pact of Alliance was actually a preemptive action by the Filipinos to prevent the Japanese from coming up with a worse document that would require Filipinos to fight for them. In defending the Pact, Laurel said:

We are not at war and we are not going to war against any nation unless we find it necessary for the

defense of the territorial integrity and independence of our country. The government of the Republic will therefore earnestly and indefatigably seek to uphold the freedom and liberties of the Filipino people with goodwill to all who respect our sovereignty and national integrity.⁵

For the Japanese, the Pact fell beneath their expectations. It was too weak and they wanted an agreement that would require Filipinos to fight for them. They also expected the Philippines to declare war on the United States and Great Britain which never happened.

Shrewdly, Laurel began to assert the independence of the Philippines first by expelling his Japanese “advisers” and refusing the Japanese to “edit” his speeches by speaking extemporaneously. While the Americans considered the Laurel-led Republic a puppet government, it was actually a true state in form and substance and Laurel was able to exercise the Republic’s sovereign will.

In reality, Laurel was performing a tightrope act. He refused the demands of the Japanese to put pro-Japanese Filipinos like Benigno Ramos into his cabinet. He proved that he was not a puppet of the Japanese but it opened a way to have him liquidated by the Japanese. He could now be assassinated and replaced by more rabid and pro-Japanese Filipinos who were ready to declare war on the United States and the Allies and commit Filipinos to fight for Japan.

HOW THE PEOPLE VIEWED LAUREL

Among the Filipino leaders during the occupation period, three officials were the most visible in collaborating with the Japanese. These were Laurel, Jorge B. Vargas, and Benigno Aquino, Sr. In the Philippine Executive Commission, Laurel was the Commissioner for Justice. Vargas was the Executive Commissioner or head of the government from 26 January 1942 up to its dissolution when the Philippine Republic was created on 14 October 1943 and he later became the Philippine ambassador to Japan for the rest of the war. Aquino was the Executive Director of the Kapisanan ng Paglilingkod sa Bagong Pilipinas (KALIBAPI) which was the unofficial and only political party allowed to exist during the Japanese occupation. Later, he became the Speaker of the Philippine Assembly. To their colleagues, Aquino was all-out in support of the Japanese and he once chided the Filipinos for being fence-sitters because he perceived that they did not extend their full support to their objectives. He said that the Americans were not coming back and that he was willing to be shot for collaborating with the Japanese.

On the side of the Filipino resistance, Laurel as well as Vargas was very visible in collaborating with the Japanese. Even before he became president, he was already a target of an assassination and was severely wounded. From the conversation of three bystanders, historian Agoncillo gathered:

Person A: Why was Laurel and not Vargas or Aquino was (*sic*) chosen to be the target for assassination?

Vargas and Aquino were as prominent in the occupation government but why only Laurel?

Other persons present whispered that the guerrillas could have been responsible for the assassination attempt on Laurel.

Person B: They (the guerrillas) hated Laurel. It is bruited about.... Laurel was pro-Japanese... He was a *Kulaboretor*! (collaborator).

Person C: Laurel was a patriot, a pro-Filipino. Not all of us could be guerrillas... Each of us has his work to do... Laurel did his.

After the third man left, the second person, a woman of fifty said of him, “*Siguro kulaboretor din ‘yon*” (Perhaps he is a collaborator, too).⁶

When Laurel was already president, a guerrilla leader Emmanuel de Ocampo from the Hunters ROTC infiltrated the grounds of Malacañang and managed to talk to Laurel himself while he was alone. De Ocampo’s mission was to ascertain who among the Filipino officials had turned traitor to their own people. De Ocampo asked if Laurel was really pro-Japanese. Laurel said he was trying to prevent a worse thing from happening—the Philippines being led by more rabid pro-Japanese in the likes of Ricarte, Ramos, and Alvero. De Ocampo left Malacañang convinced that Laurel was not a traitor but someone who was trying his best to mitigate the suffering of the Filipino people.⁷ Laurel did

save many people from the Kempeitai like Manuel Roxas, whom the dreaded military police wanted beheaded, and many of his staff like Major Salgado and Major Frago who had guerrilla links. Nevertheless, there were others, too, whom he was unable to save such as Wenceslao Vinzons and Chief Justice Abad Santos who were executed by the Japanese. Moreover, Laurel was not able to spare Manila from the massacre of February 1945 which claimed more than 100,000 lives as he was whisked away by the Japanese authorities to Japan.

THE DEMAND FOR DECLARATION OF WAR REITERATED

From time to time, the Japanese raised the issue of declaring war against the United States and Great Britain citing countries that have done so. The demand for a declaration of war was raised even before the inauguration of the Philippine Republic. Laurel used delaying tactics to stall for time. If he gave in to the Japanese, Filipinos would be conscripted to fight not only for Japan but also against their countrymen in the resistance movement. He feared that a fratricidal strife might occur once the country declared war on the Allies because some Filipinos would be fighting on the side of the Japanese and others as guerrillas fighting on the side of the Americans. Japanese pressure on Laurel increased when Ambassador Murata politely but persistently reminded him that Burma, Siam, Nanking, and the Bose government of India had already declared war on the Allies and there was a need “of organizing even a small army to defend the territorial integrity of the Philippines.”⁸

Laurel's response to the Ambassador was that it would take him time to answer the question. He consulted the matter with his Cabinet and his military advisers, General Mateo Capinpin and General Guillermo Francisco. After much deliberation and contemplation, Laurel came up with four alternatives which he laid before his Cabinet: the first was to resist the pressure and invite liquidation by the Japanese. Nobody except the hopelessly idealistic would invite physical liquidation. That person would meet the same fate as that of Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos. On this approach, Laurel was warned by Roxas not to be a martyr at the expense of the people he would leave behind.⁹

The second alternative was to flee to the mountains and join the guerrillas. Laurel already made arrangements to defect to the guerrillas and a boat for fleeing was readied. Relatives were advised and army officials were told to get in touch with guerrilla leaders such as Colonel Castañeda of Cavite, Colonel Fidel Cruz of Central Luzon, Major Carlos Ojeda of Rizal, and a certain Colonel Dumawal and Major Luna. But this option would leave the people at the mercy of the Japanese.¹⁰

The third alternative was to commit suicide in order to escape the responsibility for what might happen to the Filipinos. This option was dismissed by Laurel for being uncatholic and escapist. The final recourse was to look for any solution, perhaps a compromise which would satisfy the Japanese and at the same time make the United States understand his position.¹¹

Roxas said there was no way out of the dilemma except to declare war on the United States because the Japanese were becoming impatient and desperate in the face of increasing American air attacks on the Philippines and they needed the Filipinos to defeat an American invasion of the islands.¹²

Laurel then remembered the original instruction left by Quezon: remain in the country with Jorge Vargas to protect the people. He operated under this instruction when he came up with the policy to provide assistance to the Japanese—short of conscription—to prevent the people from totally siding with the enemy and at the same time to reduce their hardships.

In his memoirs, Laurel cited the principle of *jus gentium* by contacting the enemy and “collaborating” with them. The very nature of military occupation made his decisions very difficult. Most of all, Laurel blamed the United States for its inability to repel the invaders in the first place. With these reasons, Laurel was prepared to declare war on the United States and Great Britain. He made his intention public in the *Tribune* on 7 July 1944, which was purposely to condition the minds of the public to accept a possible declaration of war. He said: “No right-thinking Filipino would allow the reconquest of the Philippines. We must bear in mind our commitment as an ally of Japan.” In one of his speeches, he said, “*Lalabanan natin sila* [the Americans] *kung tayo ay kanilang gagalawin.*” (We will fight the Americans if they would cause us trouble.) These statements were intended to sound good to the ears of the

Japanese but they had a qualifying clause, “if they cause us trouble.” Laurel used the same argument when he faced trial for collaboration after the war. To the Americans, the declaration was war, fighting on the side of the Japanese.

The Japanese were satisfied with Laurel’s statement until Claro M. Recto remembered that under the 1935 Constitution, the president was never empowered to declare war. Only the legislative branch can declare not war, but a state of war. According to Recto, the 1935 Constitution renounced war as an instrument of national policy.¹³

During the 1934 Constitutional Convention, both Recto and Roxas debated on the issue of declaring war and declaring a state of war. Roxas favored the adoption of power to declare war while Recto sought only the power to declare a state of war. Roxas, being a product of American education, said that the power to declare war should be adopted in the constitution because the same was incorporated in the American Constitution. Recto put up a spirited debate over the semantics of “declaring war” and that of “declaring a state of war,” and won. That phrase, “declaring a state of war” became a way out of Laurel’s dilemma. In Recto’s mind, it was a phrase that showed “the perfect expression of our completely passive attitude.”¹⁴

The excuse for the Philippines to declare war on the United States came when the Americans started bombing the Philippines on 21 September 1944. The bombing caused massive destruction in the Port Area of Manila. The next day, Laurel issued Proclamation No. 30 declaring that “a state of war exists between the Philippines and the

United States and Great Britain effective 23 September 1944.”

That day on 22 September, Laurel spoke over Radio PIAM saying that the declaration of a state of war was an official recognition of the existing conditions. The war, he said, was not of our own making. We did not will it. He then assured the people that no Filipino would be conscripted to fight for the Japanese though all other means of assistance would be rendered to them. He declared: “I stand and I will stand by that statement.”¹⁵

As a public declaration, Proclamation No. 30 had no legal or binding effect. The Legislature, not the President, had the power to declare a state of war and this declaration should be ratified by the same body. Laurel deliberately did not submit the proclamation to the National Assembly for ratification. Benigno Aquino, Sr. cooperated in hoodwinking the Japanese by calling a caucus instead of a plenary or official meeting of the body which was a requirement. This took place on 29 September 1944 and the proclamation was “unanimously approved.”¹⁶

By the time the Japanese realized Laurel’s moves, it was already too late.¹⁷ Laurel declared martial law on 22 September 1944 and the Legislature had already disbanded.

Ambassador Kihara visited Laurel and tried to convince him to call a plenary session of the National Assembly to properly ratify Proclamation No. 30. He told Laurel:

Your Excellency will recall that Japan never interfered when your people became independent and adopted the republican form of government with a constitution which, provisional though, is still based on American traditions embodying a little orientalism, and that Japan left to your decision the name of your country. This pact attests to the practice of the Five Basic Principles of the Joint Declaration. Japan has conducted a Pact of Alliance with your country whereby she is bound to bear the brunt of the defense of the Philippines. She has to deal by all means a decisive blow on the enemy whose counter offensive has been intensified with the Philippines as the main object of attack.¹⁸

Laurel replied to the Ambassador saying the Filipino youth has been wasted in this war. He repeated what he told him several times in the past:

The finest flower of Filipino warriors were sacrificed in Bataan and wasted in the prison camps of Capas. What is left are weaklings, who because of the shortage of medicine, have not recovered from illness. The few healthy ones were needed by the country for national survival.¹⁹

Murata told Laurel that his declaration of the existence of war should have been acted upon by the National Assembly before being promulgated. He told him that the Legislature should have acted on it to give Proclamation No. 30 a binding effect.

At this point, Laurel felt that the Ambassador was questioning the constitutionality of the proclamation, and he said:

As I see there is nothing unconstitutional about it, for I had proclaimed martial law two hours earlier and therefore assumed complete control of our Republic. I had thrown away the Constitution by declaring martial law.²⁰

Murata insisted that the people should have been given the opportunity to express themselves through their representatives. Laurel then replied:

I have taken that into account. I made the declaration of the state of war after consultation with my cabinet. Moreover, there is no need of asking the concurrence of the National Assembly. The President of the Republic is vested with ample powers to disregard the National Assembly in times of emergency. The National Assembly is no more. Your Excellency knows, as I do, that since the bombing of the island [by the Americans] most of the assemblymen have returned to their respective homes and must be now playing hide-and-seek.²¹

In the same conversation, Ambassador Murata invoked the Pact of Alliance entered by the Philippines with Japan right after the independence of the Philippines on 14 October 1943. He said that Laurel should conscript Filipinos to fight for Japan. Laurel replied that he could not

do that because such conscription would start a revolution. He said:

I cannot easily conscript soldiers with the conditions prevailing in our country. The people are of a temper for a revolution. All we need is a national leader to call them to arms. Conscription may well be the spark to start conflagration. I cannot permit my country to fight under the present circumstances.”²²

Laurel knew that if such a conscripted army would be formed, such an army would be unreliable as it would be likely composed of former USAFFE soldiers, many of whom were veterans of Bataan and Corregidor. This group would likely fight the Japanese than the Americans to get back at their former enemies.

Laurel did not only discount that such an army might be composed of people of opposing allegiances, both pro-Americans and pro-Japanese. Such an army would end up killing itself and noncombatants would be drawn into the conflict.

Murata then asked Laurel why he bothered at all on the issue of the declaration of war if he never intended the Filipinos to fight at all. “A declaration of war,” explained Laurel, “means war as understood by all people of the world. It also means conscription. It could not be otherwise.” He reminded his guest that a declaration of war was different from a declaration of a state of war—it was not war, but it was.

The Japanese were outmaneuvered by Laurel through his skillful knowledge of the law. At the same time, Laurel placed upon himself the burden of declaring war on the U.S. and dissolving and absolving the National Assembly. While the war was going on, the Japanese lost hope of making Laurel their puppet. Laurel also added to their burden by interceding for the release of guerrilla suspects. The Japanese began to treat Laurel and his colleagues with suspicion. But he could not be replaced by the rabid pro-Japanese like Benigno Ramos and Artemio Ricarte.

To circumvent Laurel, the Japanese through the help of Benigno Ramos and Artemio Ricarte, formed the MAKAPILI. It was under the direct authority and supervision of the commander-in-chief of the Japanese forces in the Philippines. It was outside of the control of the Philippine government and composed mostly of the GANAP followers of Ramos. To insult Laurel, the Japanese high command made him attend its inauguration at Malacañang. When he refused, the Japanese warned him of the consequences of noncooperation. When he attended the inauguration of the MAKAPILI at the grounds of Malacañang, Laurel gave a short speech and exhorted its members not to turn traitors to their own country.

CONCLUSION

Laurel successfully parried the insistent demand that the Philippines declare war on the United States and the Allied powers. He managed to achieve this feat through knowledge of the legal process and brinkmanship.

On the side of the Japanese, if they managed to secure a declaration of war by the Filipinos it would help them reduce their casualties as the Filipinos would now fight side by side with them. Without a declaration of war, the Japanese were left to fight the Americans on their own.

The decision to declare or not declare war was the hardest thing Laurel did during his presidency. He contemplated many alternatives to avoid the declaration including killing himself. In his memoirs, he knelt down in the Malacañang chapel and invoked the memory of his long-dead mother. It was an agonizing decision and Laurel tried to look for a way in which the Americans and the Japanese would understand. The differences in the semantics in declaring war and declaring a state of war was a heaven-sent solution to Laurel and he decided to use it.

If Laurel gave in to the Japanese demand completely, the loyalty of a conscripted army of Filipinos would be doubtful because in his mind this army would be likely led by veteran officers who once belonged to the USAFFE. These former USAFFE officers and men would now have to fight side by side with their former enemies. Many of the USAFFE men were victims of abuses either as prisoners of war during the early part of the conflict or many of their relatives were victims of Japanese atrocities. They would end up killing their new allies. The Philippine Constabulary composed of Bataan veterans was headed by General Guillermo Francisco. This constabulary was supposed to be loyal to the Japanese but the majority of the force defected or vanished the moment the Americans landed in the Philippines.

Since Laurel was unwilling to conscript Filipinos to fight for Japan, the Japanese found an alternative by establishing the MAKAPILI, which operated outside of the control of the Laurel government and took orders only from the Japanese commander-in-chief. Having such an army was a threat to Laurel as it could be ordered to move against him such as launching a coup d'état against his government.

Also, since Laurel was unwilling to issue a real declaration of war, he made himself susceptible to liquidation. He could now be replaced by pro-Japanese Filipinos like Benigno Ramos, Artemio Ricarte, and Aurelio Alvero. But the Japanese did not oust Laurel because it would result in a civil war.

Laurel was an expert in legal terms that he fooled the Japanese translator. Declaring war was different from declaring a state of war. The Japanese were not aware then that the two terms were different. Also a declaration of a state of war required the approval of the National Assembly in a plenary session. The Japanese tried to correct this intentional error by having the National Assembly reconvened to ratify Proclamation No. 30 but Laurel said the National Assembly was no longer existent because he had declared martial law. Laurel placed the responsibility on his shoulders.

However, the declaration of a state of war did not go unnoticed by the Americans. To them declaring war and declaring a state of war were the same. It must be remembered that when war began between the United States

and Japan, President Franklin D. Roosevelt informed that the United States is now in a state of war with Japan and he asked Congress to ratify the declaration. Like Laurel, Roosevelt simply confirmed an existing situation between his country and Japan.

At the end of the war, President Laurel and most of the top officials of his government were jailed and accused of treason against the Philippines and the United States. The treatment of those who collaborated with the Japanese invaders by the Americans was arbitrary. Persons like Roxas and Capinpin were “liberated” by the Americans while others like Laurel, Vargas, and many of the cabinet members suffered the humiliation of being called traitors to their own country. Numerous officials in the government especially those in the postwar Philippine Congress were collaborators of the Japanese. They included Elpidio Quirino who later became Roxas’ vice president. These former collaborators resumed their political life and collected three years’ back pay. Their return to politics negated all efforts to make collaborators accountable for their acts.

The most humiliating spot was reserved for Laurel because he was the puppet president, according to the Americans, and he declared war on the United States. The Americans ignored the fact that Laurel and the rest of the wartime officials served to prevent greater harm on the Filipino people.

According to General Douglas MacArthur, there were elements in the United States who wished Laurel to be

tried as a war criminal for declaring war against the United States. MacArthur contemplated putting Laurel along with the Class A war criminals which included Prime Minister Hideki Tojo and General Tomuyuki Yamashita. General MacArthur once said that Laurel should be thankful that he was not hanged. He also said that he allowed Laurel and Vargas to remain in Japan after the war until hateful sentiments against them had simmered down so they could be brought to Manila for trial.²³

Claro M. Recto angrily reacted to MacArthur's remarks saying that Laurel owed MacArthur nothing. Laurel was not a war criminal and he was never included among the Class A and Class B war criminals in the Tokyo and Manila war crimes trials.²⁴ Recto pointed out that the Potsdam Declaration never included collaboration with the enemy as a war crime. Compared to Tojo who began the war with the United States and to Yamashita whose men caused the destruction of Manila, Laurel saved thousands of Filipino lives by not declaring war on the United States. In defending Laurel, Claro M. Recto said if Laurel was a war criminal, Roxas should also be accused of war crimes because it was Roxas who suggested to Laurel that he declare war on the United States.²⁵

When Laurel declared war on the United States, it was legally void because it was not approved by the Philippine Legislature. In order to absolve the burden of future accountability on the wartime assemblymen if the Japanese forced the Legislature to convene, Laurel had it dismissed after he proclaimed martial law on 23 September 1944. So it remained solely on Laurel himself to promulgate

the declaration of war. The buck stopped with him. He was the only one who could approve the declaration but even then, such declaration was not as potent if it had the backing of the Legislature. Thus, Laurel bore the brunt of the retribution of the Americans when they returned.

Laurel collaborated with the Japanese but his collaboration saved thousands of lives and prevented more harm to the country. During his trial before the People's Court, Laurel said that he was simply following the instructions given to him by President Quezon and by General MacArthur himself. There was no swearing of loyalty to Japan; no Filipinos conscripted to fight for Japan; and no declaration of war that would favor Japan. Laurel said by saving Filipino lives, there was patriotism in collaboration. This course of action depended on the situation. Laurel also blamed the United States for its unpreparedness to defend the Philippines from aggression. He said if America prepared the Philippines against the invasion and repelled the enemy, there would be no aggression. If there was no aggression, the country would not be occupied. If the country was never occupied, there would be no collaboration.

In the end, the Americans never completely settled the collaboration issue and left it to be resolved by the Filipinos themselves not through the courts but through the bar of public opinion, and ultimately history. Today, Laurel is remembered as a statesman, not a collaborator, not a traitor but a savior of his nation, not a puppet president but a man who delicately threaded the demands of both the Americans and the Japanese to save his country.

APPENDIX

THE PROCLAMATION DECLARING THE EXISTENCE OF A STATE WAR BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES

Proclamation No. 30
Manila, 22 September 1944

WHEREAS, the Filipino people, during the whole period of their subjection to alien rule, have unremittingly labored for their freedom and independence and to those end fought two wars and countless revolutions;

WHEREAS, upon the attainment by the Philippines of this cherished goal of freedom and independence and on the occasion of the inauguration of the Republic of the Philippines on 14 October 1943, the President appealed to all nations and peoples of the world for amity and goodwill and to the United States especially pleaded that the Philippines be spared the sufferings and destruction incident to the resumption of military operations on our soil;

WHEREAS, notwithstanding this appeal, the United States and Great Britain have attacked from the air certain parts of the Philippines thereby violating the territorial integrity of the Republic, causing much death, injury and destruction or damage to their property;

WHEREAS, the Philippines must safeguard its independence and territorial integrity as every self-respecting sovereign state is in honor bound to do; and

WHEREAS, the Republic of the Philippines has entered into a Pact of Alliance with Japan, based on mutual respect of sovereignty and territories, to safeguard the territorial integrity and independence of the Philippines.

NOW THEREFORE, I, JOSE P. LAUREL, President of the Republic of the Philippines, do thereby proclaim that a state of war exists between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States and Great Britain, effective 23 September 1944, at 10:00 in the morning.

Face to face with the grim realities of war, I earnestly call upon every Filipino at this momentous hour to show his unswerving loyalty and to give his support to the Government, so that regardless of the trials and tribulations we are undergoing and those we shall have to suffer in near future, we may closely and firmly unite to safeguard the freedom and independent existence of the Philippines.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Republic of the Philippines, to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Manila, this twenty-second day of September in the year of our Lord, nineteen hundred and forty-four and of the Republic of the Philippines, the first.

(Sgd.) JOSE P. LAUREL

President of the Republic of the Philippines

Source: Laurel Papers, Exhibit No. 187, Proclamation No. 30, Proclaiming the Existence of a State of War, 30 September 1944, Box 9, S. 4, Folder No. 1, Laurel Memorial Library.

NOTES

- 1 Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *Burden of Proof: The Laurel-Vargas Collaboration Case* (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia, Publishing), 43.
- 2 Jose P. Laurel, *War Memoirs*, (Manila: Jose P. Laurel Memorial Foundation), 13.
- 3 Mauro Garcia, ed., *Documents on the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines* (Manila: Philippine Historical Association, 1965), 15–16.
- 4 Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years: Japan's Adventure in the Philippines* (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia Publishing House, 1965.) 1:57.
- 5 Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, 82.
- 6 Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, 98.
- 7 Col. Emmanuel de Ocampo, Personal Interview. Manila, 20 March 2001.
- 8 Agoncillo, *Burden of Proof*, 69.
- 9 Laurel, 57.
- 10 Laurel, 57.
- 11 Laurel, 57.

- 12 Laurel, 69–70.
- 13 Laurel, 70.
- 14 Laurel, 70. See Appendix, Proclamation No. 30, S. of 1944, “Declaring the Existence of a State of War Between the Philippines and the United States.”
- 15 Laurel, 70.
- 16 Laurel, 70.
- 17 Laurel, 70.
- 18 Laurel, 70.
- 19 Laurel, 70.
- 20 Laurel, 70.
- 21 Laurel, 22.
- 22 Laurel, 22.
- 23 Frederic S. McQuardt, “MacArthur on Laurel,” *Philippines Free Press*, 28 July 1951.
- 24 Class A criminals were defined as those in leadership positions who prosecuted the war while Class B criminals were those who prosecuted the war and followed the orders of the Class A criminals.
- 25 Claro M. Recto, “Laurel Owes MacArthur Nothing,” *Philippines Free Press*, 29 September 1951, 24.

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