

March 2, 1934

[Message on Philippine Independence]

FDR Speech File

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TO THE CONGRESS:

Over a third of a century ago the United States as a result of a war which had its origin in the Caribbean Sea ~~gained~~ *Acquired* sovereignty over the Philippine Islands, which lie many thousands of miles from our shores across the widest of oceans. Our Nation covets no ~~new~~ territory ~~for~~; it desires to hold no people over whom it has gained sovereignty through war against their will.

In keeping with the principles of justice and in keeping with our traditions and aims, our government for many years has been committed by law to ultimate independence for the people of the Philippine Islands whenever ~~these people~~ *they* should establish a suitable government capable of maintaining that independence among the Nations of the world. We have believed that the time for such independence is at hand.

A law passed by the Seventy-Second Congress over a year ago was the initial step, providing the methods, conditions and circumstances under which our promise was to be fulfilled. That Act provided that the United States would retain the option of keeping certain Military and Naval bases in the Islands after actual independence had been accomplished.

As to the Military bases, I recommend that this provision be eliminated from the law and that these bases be relinquished simultaneously with the accomplishment of final Philippine independence.

As to the Naval bases, I recommend that the law be so amended as to provide for the ultimate settlement of this matter on terms satisfactory to our own government and that of the Philippine Islands. ~~A~~ I do not believe that other provisions of the original law need be changed at this time. Where imperfections or inequalities exist, I am confident that they can be corrected after proper hearing and in fairness to both peoples.

May I emphasize that while we desire to grant complete independence at the earliest proper moment, to effect this result without allowing sufficient time for necessary political and economic adjustments would be a definite injustice to the people of the Philippine Islands themselves little short of a denial of independence itself. To change, at this time, the economic provisions of the previous law would reflect discredit on ourselves.

In view of the fact that the time element is involved, I suggest that the law be amended as I have above suggested and that the time limit for the acceptance of the law by the proper authorities and by the people of the Philippine Islands be sufficiently extended to permit them to reconsider it.

For thirty-six years the relations between the people of the Philippine Islands and the people of the United States have

been friendly and of great mutual benefit. I am confident that if this legislation is passed by the Congress and accepted by the ~~people~~ ~~of the Philippine Islands~~, we shall increase the mutual regard between the two peoples during the transition period. After the attainment of actual independence by them, friendship and trust will live.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The White House
March 2, 1934