

FINAL

WEST POINT'S ROLE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Speech of H.E. President Fidel V. Ramos U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York Visit to the United States of America November 12, 1993

INTRODUCTION

I CAME TO WEST POINT FORTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO WITH A FEELING OF GREAT AWE.

TODAY THAT FEELING HAS NOT CHANGED.

THERE ARE ALSO OTHER THINGS THAT HAVE NOT CHANGED, I AM TOLD. CADETS STILL WEAR THE DRESS GRAY WITH SNAP-ON COLLAR AND CUFFS. CADETS STILL WALK THE "AREA." PLEBE BOXING IS AS BLOODY AS BEFORE. PLEBES STILL CUT THE CAKES, AND PERHAPS, EVEN USE A TEMPLATE ONCE IN A WHILE.

I WAS ALWAYS INTIMIDATED BY THE LOGIC OF MY UPPERCLASSMEN WHO USED TO SAY TO US PLEBES, "HOW CAN YOU LEAD MEN IN COMBAT IF YOU CANNOT CUT A CAKE IN EQUAL PROPORTIONS?" VERY FRANKLY, TO THIS DAY, I STILL HAVE NOT UNDERSTOOD THE WISDOM BEHIND THAT STATEMENT.

I AM PROUD THAT THE CADET'S AND ALUMNI'S COMMITMENT TO **DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY** HAS NOT NOT CHANGED EITHER.

PHILIPPINE-U.S. RELATIONS

AS A FOREIGN GRADUATE, I DREW FROM WEST POINT THE VALUES OF **DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY**, AND ALSO MUCH OF MY COMMITMENT TO THE IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM.

IN THIS CONTEXT, MY VISIT TO OUR ALMA MATER TODAY IS MORE THAN A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY; MINE IS ALSO A JOURNEY TO REINVIGORATE THE BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES.

I AM NOT, BY THE WAY, THE FIRST FILIPINO GRADUATE OF WEST POINT. THAT HONOR BELONGS TO GENERAL VICENTE LIM, CLASS OF 1914, WHO BECAME A DIVISION COMMANDER IN THE PHILIPPINE ARMY AND WAS EXECUTED BY THE ENEMY DURING WORLD WAR II. [His son, Vicente Lim, Jr., Class of 1944, incidentally, is with my party today.]

THERE WERE 19 FILIPINO WEST POINT GRADUATES WHO FOUGHT SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE AMERICANS IN WORLD WAR II. WHEN THAT WAR BROKE OUT, 267 AMERICAN WEST POINT GRADUATES -- DRAWN FROM 39 CLASSES -- WERE ON ACTIVE DUTY IN THE PHILIPPINES. NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF THEM -- 173 TO BE EXACT -- PERISHED THERE.

ONE MILLION FILIPINOS DIED DURING WORLD WAR II EITHER AS COMBATANTS OF THE U.S. ARMY FORCES IN THE FAR EAST (USAFFE), AS GUERRILLA RESISTANCE FIGHTERS DURING THE THREE-YEAR OCCUPATION,

OR AS INNOCENT BYSTANDERS IN A WAR MY PEOPLE DID NOT UNDERSTAND AS TO WHY IT HAPPENED IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THE MOST PROMINENT WEST POINTER WHO SERVED IN THE PHILIPPINES WAS GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, CLASS OF 1903, WHO WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING OF THE PHILIPPINE ARMY IN 1935, FOUGHT THE DEFENSE OF THE PHILIPPINES ON BATAAN AND CORREGIDOR IN 1942, ESCAPED TO AUSTRALIA AND LED THE LIBERATION OF THE PHILIPPINES IN 1945, FULFILLING HIS PLEDGE OF "I SHALL RETURN". [His father, General Arthur MacArthur, was the first Military Governor of Manila in 1898, and later became the first Military Governor of the Philippines in 1900.]

DURING HIS EARLY DAYS IN THE PHILIPPINES, DOUGLAS MACARTHUR WAS ASSISTED BY ANOTHER FAMOUS ALUMNUS, THEN MAJOR DWIGHT EISENHOWER.

I BRING UP THESE FACTS OF "ANCIENT HISTORY" TO REMIND YOU THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES IS A LONG ONE -- AND THAT WEST POINT ALUMNI HAVE PLAYED A PROMINENT ROLE IN THAT RELATIONSHIP.

OUR OWN PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY, WHICH WAS FOUNDED AS THE PHILIPPINE CONSTABULARY ACADEMY IN 1905, WAS ESTABLISHED BY WEST POINTERS AND PATTERNED AFTER WEST POINT. THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY HAS A SIMILAR CURRICULUM, UNIFORMS, FOURTH-CLASS SYSTEM AND HONOR CODE.

IT MAY INTEREST YOU TO KNOW THAT ONE OF YOUR FOURTH-CLASS CADETS PRESENTLY HERE FROM THE PHILIPPINES, CADET EUGENE CABUSAO, HAS HAD TO SUFFER TWO CYCLES OF BEAST BARRACKS AS HE SPENT BEAST BARRACKS IN THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY PRIOR TO COMING HERE. HOW LUCKY CAN YOU GET?

EVEN AFTER THE PHILIPPINES BECAME INDEPENDENT, THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND THEIR DEFENSE FORCES CONTINUED. FILIPINOS, INCLUDING MYSELF, FOUGHT UNDER THE PHILIPPINE FLAG ON THE SAME SIDE AS THE AMERICANS IN TWO ASIAN CONFLICTS -- KOREA AND VIETNAM.

BOTH OUR COUNTRIES REMAIN BOUND BY A MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY THAT DATES BACK TO 1951. THIS PHILIPPINE-UNITED STATES TREATY CONTINUES TO BE IN EFFECT UP TO THE PRESENT TIME UNDER A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL AND A MUTUAL DEFENSE BOARD HEADED BY THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, PACIFIC (CINCPAC).

THIS WEEK, OUR TWO ARMED FORCES ARE UNDERTAKING JOINT TRAINING EXERCISES AT FORT MAGSAYSAY IN LUZON TO TEST AND ENHANCE THE INTER-OPERABILITY OF U.S. AND PHILIPPINES UNITS, THE TWELFTH IN A SERIES OF *BALIKATAN* (SHOULDER TO SHOULDER) MANEUVERS HELD ANNUALLY.

MANY EMINENT PHILIPPINE LEADERS HAVE URGED THAT THE UNITED STATES AND THE PHILIPPINES FORGE A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS AWAY "FROM THE STULTIFYING ATMOSPHERE OF THE BASES ISSUE." I SUBSCRIBE TO THAT VIEW AND CHAMPION IT STRONGLY.

AS ONE CONTEMPLATES THE HORIZON OF PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS, THREE MASSIVE AND COMPELLING FACTS INSTANTLY OBTRUDE IN ONE'S MIND: FIRST, OUR TWO COUNTRIES HAVE A CONTINUING COMMUNITY OF STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS. SECOND, THE UNITED STATES REMAINS OUR BIGGEST AND MOST PROFITABLE MARKET. AND THIRD, THE UNITED STATES REMAINS THE UNDISPUTED LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD.

THESE CENTRAL REALITIES TRANSCEND FLUCTUATIONS IN THE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE OF PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS. THEY CONSTITUTE INVARIABLE CONSTANTS IN OUR BILATERAL AFFAIRS, WHICH EITHER COUNTRY CAN ILL AFFORD TO SUBORDINATE TO TRANSIENT CONSIDERATIONS AND SHORT-TERM EXIGENCIES.

LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT THE FILIPINO NATION CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN A DEEP RESERVOIR OF GOODWILL TOWARD THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. WE CONTINUE TO CONSIDER YOU OUR SPECIAL FRIENDS.

I SPEAK OF A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO SOVEREIGN NATIONS THAT IS BUILT ON MUTUAL RESPECT AND MUTUAL SUPPORT, AND, FOR THIS REASON, IS MUTUALLY REWARDING, ENRICHING AND BENEFICIAL.

THERE ARE TODAY TWO MILLION AMERICANS WHO CONSIDER THE UNITED STATES THEIR HOMETLAND AND THE PHILIPPINES THEIR MOTHERLAND. REPRESENTATIVE OF THESE GROWING GROUP IS CADET 1ST CLASS ANTONIO DE GUIA, JR., A PROUD AMERICAN CITIZEN, BORN OF FILIPINO PARENTS.

WE IN THE PHILIPPINES HAVE OUR OWN VISION. WE SEEK TO ACHIEVE THE STATUS OF A NEWLY INDUSTRIALIZING COUNTRY BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY. TO THIS END, WE MUST FORGE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TIES WITH OUR WORLD NEIGHBORS -- AND, GIVEN OUR HISTORY, WE FILIPINOS FIND IT NATURAL TO LOOK AT THE UNITED STATES AS A MAJOR PARTNER IN THIS EFFORT.

NO RETREAT TO ISOLATION

THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY TODAY'S AMERICA IS FAR FROM BEING THE COLOSSUS THAT BESTRODE THE GLOBE AFTER WORLD WAR II.

THESE SOMBER SOULS SEE AMERICA AS SADLY DIMINISHED IN SPIRIT -- AS SO ANXIOUS ABOUT ITS FALL FROM PRE-EMINENCE IN THE WORLD THAT IT FEELS NEITHER GENEROSITY NOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MISERIES OF OTHER PEOPLES.

WE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC HAVE A MORE OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF AMERICA -- AND GREATER EXPECTATIONS FROM IT.

WE KNOW THAT FOR AMERICA THERE CAN NO RETREAT TO **ISOLATIONISM**.

THE BONDS OF THE WORLD ECONOMY AND THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION ARE LINKING ALL OUR COUNTRIES TOGETHER -- IRREVOCABLY.

BUT, BEYOND THAT, WE CONTINUE TO TRUST IN THE UNIQUE SENSE OF MISSION THAT WE KNOW IS AT THE HEART OF AMERICA.

AS BARBARA TUCHMAN HAS NOTED, AMERICA DID NOT EVOLVE SLOWLY OUT OF AN ANCIENT PAST.

"AMERICA, SHE WROTE, "IS A NATION CONSCIOUSLY CONCEIVED... A PLANNED IDEA OF DEMOCRACY, OF LIBERTY, OF CONSCIENCE, AND OF THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS."

ITS FOUNDERS SAW AMERICA AS A VENTURE GREATER THAN JUST ANOTHER NATIONAL ENTERPRISE. THEY SAW THEIR COUNTRY AS BRINGING A REVOLUTIONARY MESSAGE TO THE REST OF MANKIND.

IN THE 1950'S, THIS SENSE OF A DESTINY SHARED WITH OTHER FREE PEOPLES EXPRESSED ITSELF IN THE MARSHALL PLAN AND THE BERLIN AIRLIFT; IN NATO, WHICH WAS AMERICA'S FIRST "PEACETIME" MILITARY ALLIANCE; AND IN PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S POINT FOUR PROGRAM.

AMERICA'S LEADERSHIP OF THE UNITED NATIONS EXPEDITIONARY FORCES IN KOREA -- WHERE I SERVED IN 1952 AS A RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON COMMANDER IN THE PHILIPPINE ARMY'S 20TH BATTALION COMBAT TEAM -- WAS ALSO PART OF THIS UNIQUE SENSE OF MISSION.

SINCE THE NEED FOR COOPERATION AMONG NATIONS WILL NEVER BE OUTMODED, THE WORLD'S NEED FOR **IDEALISM** IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TODAY IS STILL AS GREAT AS IT HAS BEEN THESE PAST 50 YEARS.

MACARTHUR'S PEACETIME ACHIEVEMENT

SURELY, IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO RECALL AT THIS JUNCTURE MACARTHUR'S GENIUS AS A WORLD-STATESMAN AND LEADER OF MEN. WE SHOULD ADMIRE HIM EQUALLY, IF NOT MORE, FOR HIS REHABILITATION OF POST-WAR JAPAN. TODAY, JAPAN IS NOT ONLY A PEACEFUL NATION THAT HAS REJECTED WAR AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POLICY. IT IS ALSO A GREAT ECONOMIC POWER COMMITTED TO DEMOCRATIC IDEALS. GENERAL MACARTHUR'S ENLIGHTENED GOVERNANCE OF JAPAN MAY BE REGARDED AS A MAJOR FACTOR THAT TRIGGERED THE REMARKABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LATER YEARS OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC BASIN.

MACARTHUR'S SINGULAR IMPACT ON JAPAN AND ON THE ENTIRE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION IS EMBODIED IN THE MANNER BY WHICH HE BROUGHT ABOUT THESE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES. WHILE HE ENJOYED FAR-REACHING POWERS, HE DID NOT RESORT TO FORCE. HE RESPECTED THE SENSITIVITIES OF THE JAPANESE PEOPLE. HE WORKED THROUGH JAPAN'S LEADERS. HE DID NOT VIOLATE THEIR CULTURE.

MACARTHUR HIMSELF SAID THAT HE HAD TO BE "AN ECONOMIST, A POLITICAL SCIENTIST, AN ENGINEER, A MANUFACTURING EXECUTIVE, A TEACHER, EVEN A THEOLOGIAN OF SORTS."

ON ANOTHER OCCASION, HE SAID, "SCAP (SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS) IS NOT CONCERNED WITH HOW TO KEEP JAPAN DOWN, BUT HOW TO GET HER ON HER FEET AGAIN.... WE SHALL NOT DO FOR THEM WHAT THEY CAN DO FOR THEMSELVES."

MACARTHUR INSPIRED HIS OWN SUBORDINATES TO ADOPT THIS ATTITUDE. AS ONE OF THESE SUBORDINATES PUT IT, "WE MUST RESTORE SECURITY, DIGNITY, AND SELF-RESPECT TO A WARRIOR NATION WHICH HAS SUFFERED AN ANNIHILATING DEFEAT."

IN A SENSE, WEST POINT DID NOT TEACH GENERAL MACARTHUR HOW TO CHANGE A NATION. AS WILLIAM MANCHESTER, HIS BIOGRAPHER, PUT IT, "ALL WEST POINT HAD GIVEN HIM WAS A LODESTAR, THE ACADEMY MOTTO: "**DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY.**"

BUT, ACCORDING TO MACHESTER, "IN AN AGE OF PRAGMATIC POLITICIANS, THE GENERAL SOUGHT FOOHOLD IN THE BEDROCK OF PRINCIPLES."

"TO HIM," FRAZIER HUNT WROTE, "ISSUES AUTOMATICALLY BECAME MORAL ISSUES, HIS DECISIONS RESTING ON THE SIMPLE TEST OF WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG.... THE ANCIENT VERITIES STILL REMAINED THE BASIS OF THE GREAT DECISIONS THAT MACARTHUR MADE."

OBVIOUSLY, MOST OF US DO NOT HAVE MACARTHUR'S FLAIR FOR THE DRAMATIC. THE MOST WE CAN DO IS TO FOLLOW THE SAME LODESTAR OF **DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY** THAT GUIDED HIM AND OTHER EMINENT GRADUATES -- AND TO EMULATE HIS BREADTH OF VISION AND PERSONAL COURAGE THAT ENABLED HIM TO INSPIRE SO MANY PEOPLE.

IN A MUCH LARGER SENSE, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT ANY VIABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH ANY OTHER NATION ON EARTH MUST BE BASED ON OUR COMMITMENT TO **DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY** -- AND THE CONDUCT AND PERFORMANCE IMPLIED BY THIS COMMITMENT. IT WILL NOT ALWAYS BE EASY TO ASCERTAIN WHAT THIS COMMITMENT DEMANDS, BUT WE MUST ALWAYS DO OUR BEST TO FIND IT OUT.

THE LESSONS HERE ARE CLEAR. AMIDST DIVERSITIES AND CLASH OF CULTURES, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE EFFECTIVE WAYS TO INTRODUCE, NURTURE AND STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY AND TO ESTABLISH LASTING RELATIONSHIPS.

LET US LOOK AT GENERAL MACARTHUR AS A MODEL OF THE SOLDIER-STATESMAN, DEEPLY COMMITTED TO DEMOCRATIC IDEALS; MAGNANIMOUS IN VICTORY; TOTALLY COMMITTED TO SERVICE; WITH A SENSE OF JUSTICE AND FAIR PLAY; AND SENSITIVE TO THE DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS OF A WHOLE NATION AND A VAST COMMUNITY OF NATIONS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC BASIN.

THE NEW BATTLEFIELDS

AS YOU PURSUE YOUR MILITARY CAREERS, THERE WILL BE CONTINUING CHALLENGES THAT WILL DEMAND THAT YOU USE YOUR CAPABILITIES TO THE FULLEST. THE WARS YOU MAY HAVE TO FIGHT COULD INVOLVE POVERTY, HUNGER, DISEASE, CALAMITIES AND OPPRESSION. YOU SHOULD BE READY TO BE SOLDIERS OF PEACE, TO BE NATION-BUILDERS, TO BE CATALYSTS OF UNDERSTANDING AND GOODWILL AMONG PEOPLES AND AMONG NATIONS.

THE STARTING POINT FOR SUCH READINESS IS OUR COMMITMENT TO **DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY.**

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, LT. GENERAL HOWARD D. GRAVES; THE COMMANDANT OF CADETS, BRIG. GENERAL ROBERT F. FOLEY; THE DEAN OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD, BRIG. GENERAL GERALD E. GALLOWAY, JR. AND THE STAFF HERE AT WEST POINT, I COMMEND AND CONGRATULATE YOU FOR THE TREMENDOUS WORK YOU HAVE DONE TO ENSURE THAT WEST POINT REMAINS A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE. YOU CONTINUE TO MOLD LEADERS IN THE BEST TRADITIONS OF THOSE WHO HAVE COME BEFORE YOU. FOR THESE EFFORTS, I SALUTE YOU. FROM AN APPRECIATIVE GRADUATE, I SAY "**CARRY ON!**"

TO THE CORPS OF CADETS.... THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR GIVING ME THE HONOR AND PRIVILEGE OF ADDRESSING YOU TODAY.

BEFORE I CLOSE, MAY I ADD TWO MORE THINGS. FIRST, THE ARMY-NAVY GAME. BACK IN THE PHILIPPINES, THIS IS A YEARLY EVENT THAT ALUMNI FROM WEST POINT AND ANNAPOLIS ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO. THIS YEAR, AS I DID LAST YEAR, I WILL BE HOSTING THE REUNION OF THE GRADUATES OF BOTH SERVICE ACADEMIES TO WATCH THE GAME BY SATELLITE. AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES, I AM SUPPOSED TO BE NEUTRAL. BUT I WOULD NOT MIND IT AT ALL IF YOU REPEAT THE RESULT OF THAT THRILLING GAME LAST YEAR.

AND LAST, BUT CERTAINLY NOT THE LEAST -- **AS A VISITING HEAD OF STATE AND AS A TYPICAL PLEBE WHO SERVED PUNISHMENT TOURS HAULING ROCKS FROM THE GOLF COURSE THEN UNDER CONSTRUCTION, I HEREBY GRANT AMNESTY TO THE CORPS OF CADETS.**

IF I HAVE ANY SINGLE MESSAGE FOR THIS GREAT COUNTRY -- AND FOR YOU, ITS FUTURE LEADERS -- IT WOULD BE THIS:

AMERICA, ALWAYS BE TRUE TO YOUR SPIRIT -- FOR IN BEING TRUE TO YOUR VALUES AND IDEALS, YOU ALSO SERVE YOUR OWN HIGHEST SELF-INTEREST, AND OF THOSE IN THE WORLD WHO WISH YOU WELL.

GOOD LUCK. GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU AND GOD BLESS BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND THE PHILIPPINES! THANK YOU AND GOOD DAY.