

Speech of H. E. President Fidel V. Ramos
Subic Turn-Over Ceremony
Subic Naval Base, Olongapo
November 24, 1992

INTRODUCTION

AMBASSADOR SOLOMON, SECRETARY ROMULO, SECRETARY DE VILLA, ADMIRAL KELLY, MAYOR GORDON, ADMIRAL MERCER, THE DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MY CO-WORKERS IN THE CABINET, THE VARIOUS LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, OFFICERS AND ENLISTED PERSONNEL AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES OF OUR TWO ARMED FORCES, MGA KASAMA, MGA KAIBIGAN, MGA MINAMAHAL NA KABABAYAN, MAGANDANG TANGHALI SA INYONG LAHAT, GOOD MORNING TO EVERYBODY.

THE PHILIPPINE FLAG BY ITSELF HAS JUST BEEN RAISED OVER SUBIC. AT MGA KABABAYAN TAYO AY MAPALAD DAHIL SA TAYONG LAHAT AY NAGING BAHAGI NITONG MAKASAYSAYANG PANAHON NANG ATING SAKSIHAN ANG PAGTAAS MULI NG ATING WATAWAT AT IYAN AY NAGKAKAHULUGAN NA ITONG SUBIC NAVAL BASE AY NASA KONTROL NG ATING PAMAHALAAN AT NG MGA MAMAMAYANG FILIPINO.

BEHIND US UNNOTICED, MY DEAR FRIENDS, MGA KABABAYAN AY ISANG BARKONG FILIPINO. IYAN ANG BARKO NA NAGNGANGALANG "ANG PANGULO". IT IS A SMALL SHIP. IT IS NOT EVEN A WARSHIP BUT IT IS OURS, MY DEAR FRIENDS, AND IT ALSO SYMBOLIZES TOGETHER WITH THIS BIGGEST PHILIPPINE FLAG THAT I HAVE EVER SEEN, THE RETURN OF THE CONTROL AND SOVEREIGNTY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES OVER THIS HISTORIC U.S. MILITARY FACILITY WHICH NOW PHASES OUT OF EXISTENCE.

IN THE LONG HISTORY OF OUR PEOPLE, IT WILL BE REMEMBERED THAT SINCE MIGUEL LOPEZ DE LEGAZPI TOOK POSSESSION OF THE PHILIPPINE ARCHIPELAGO IN THE NAME OF THE SPANISH CROWN IN 1571, THERE HAS BEEN NO DAY THAT PHILIPPINE TROOPS WERE NOT BASED ON OUR SOIL. AND SO AFTER 421 UNINTERRUPTED YEARS, THAT EPOCH IS ABOUT TO BE TRANSFORMED. WE CAN BE SURE THAT THIS DAY WILL FOREVER BE ENGRAVED IN OUR MEMORIES.

TODAY'S SIMPLE BUT MOVING CEREMONIES BRING DOWN THE CURTAIN ON THAT LONG AND STORIED ERA IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY MARKED BY THE PRESENCE OF AMERICAN TROOPS IN OUR TERRITORY. THEY ALSO OPEN UP NEW PROSPECTS IN PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS, WHICH BEAR THE CREATIVE INNOVATION AND CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE.

FOR CLOSE TO A CENTURY, AMERICAN MILITARY FACILITIES AND FORCES IN SUBIC NAVAL BASE HELPED PRESERVE THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THIS HIGHLY STRATEGIC AREA OF THE WORLD. AND UP TO THE PERSIAN GULF WAR, SUBIC NAVAL BASE SERVED AS A PIVOTAL UNIT IN THE SCHEME OF FREE WORLD DEFENSE IN THE ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION.

IN A REAL AND PROFOUND SENSE, SUBIC NAVAL BASE WAS A BEACON TO THE PARTS OF THE GLOBE WHICH HAD NOT BEEN ILLUMINED BY THE BENEFICIENT LIGHT OF FREEDOM. IT ALSO STOOD AS A MONUMENT TO THE COMRADESHIP IN ARMS OF A DEVELOPING NATION, THE PHILIPPINES, AND A SUPERPOWER, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BORN OUT OF A COMMON COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM, NURTURED BY MUTUAL RESPECT AND REGARD, AND SUSTAINED BY SHARED EXPERIENCE AND A SIMILAR VISION.

FROM THE WELTER OF VARIED VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN REGIONAL AFFAIRS, OUR REGION OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, ONE PORTENTOUS REALITY EMERGES, AND THAT IS, THAT THE MEMBER NATIONS OF ASEAN UNIFORMLY HOLD THE VIEW THAT AMERICAN POWER AND INFLUENCE CONTINUE TO BE ESSENTIAL TO THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION.

THE FUTURE OF RP-US RELATIONS

TURNING TO PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS, LET ME SAY IN PLAIN, UNMISTAKABLE TERMS THAT WE HAVE A CONTINUING COMMUNITY OF STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS WITH THE UNITED STATES. THIS CENTRAL FACT OF LIFE TRANSCENDS FLUCTUATIONS IN THE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE OF PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS. IT DENOTES INVARIABLE CONSTANTS IN BILATERAL AFFAIRS, WHICH EITHER COUNTRY CAN ILL AFFORD TO SUBORDINATE TO TRANSIENT CONSIDERATIONS AND EPHEMERAL EXIGENCIES.

MANY OF OUR EMINENT LEADERS HAVE URGED THAT THE UNITED STATES AND THE PHILIPPINES FASHION A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS AWAY, AND I QUOTE; "FROM THE STULTIFYING ATMOSPHERE OF THE BASES ISSUE." I FULLY AND CATEGORICALLY SUBSCRIBE TO THAT VIEW.

HISTORY HAS A WAY OF VALIDATING IDEAS. WE ALL CAN SEE HOW THE RESULT OF THE RECENT AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS LENDS VALIDITY AND URGENCY TO THE PROPOSITION THAT OUR TWO COUNTRIES MUST NOW FASHION A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR THEIR RELATIONSHIP IN KEEPING WITH THE GEOPOLITICAL REALITIES PREVAILING IN THEIR COMMON AREAS OF CONCERN AND INTEREST.

AS ONE CONTEMPLATES THE PICTURE OF PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN AFFAIRS, TWO MASSIVE AND COMPELLING FACTS INSTANTLY OBTRUDE IN ONE'S MIND: FIRST, THE UNITED STATES MARKET REMAINS OUR BIGGEST AND MOST PROFITABLE. AND SECOND, THE UNITED STATES REMAINS THE UNDISPUTED LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD.

AT A TIME WHEN THE PHILIPPINES' EXPORT TRADE HAS CONTINUOUSLY BEEN IN THE DOLDRUMS, WE HAVE UNINTERRUPTEDLY ENJOYED A WHOPPING TRADE SURPLUS WITH THE UNITED STATES, WHICH WAS REGISTERED AT \$1.2 BILLION LAST YEAR.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY, WHICH LIES AT THE CORE OF THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES, CRIES FOR A NEW, BRACING BREATH OF LIFE. FRAMED AND ADOPTED AT THE HEIGHT OF THE COLD WAR, WHEN AMERICAN AND FREE WORLD STRATEGY WAS BASED ON THE IDEA OF SURROUNDING THE SOVIET EMPIRE WITH BASES OF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH, THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY HAS NOW TO BE REEXAMINED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE POST-COLD WAR ERA. ITS CONCEPT, ITS THRUST, AND ITS SCOPE HAVE TO BE ATTUNED TO THE REALITIES OF A WORLD TORMENTED BY NEW CONFLICTS AND RIVALRIES AND FACED WITH NEW TRIALS AND CHALLENGES.

TWO MATTERS, IN PARTICULAR, HAVE TO BE CLARIFIED: WHEN AND WHERE AN ATTACK ON ONE PARTY IS TO BE REGARDED AS AN ATTACK ON THE OTHER PARTY AS WELL, AND THE PRECISE POINT AT WHICH RETALIATION TO ATTACK IS TO BE WAGED. IT IS WELL TO BEAR IN MIND THAT THESE TWO MATTERS HAVE TENDED TO BE IRRITANTS IN THE RELATIONSHIP OVER THE YEARS BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES.

THE SCOPE AND THE COMPOSITION OF BILATERAL TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION HAVE TO BE REVIEWED AND UPDATED. THE MECHANISM OF BILATERAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HAS TO BE RE-ENGINEERED WITH A VIEW TO THE PROGRESSIVE REALIZATION OF EXPANDING MUTUAL PROGRESS.

AT THIS MOMENT IN TIME, THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES ARE CALLED UPON TO IMPROVE THE STRUCTURE OF THEIR HISTORICAL AND TRADITIONAL RELATIONSHIP. THEY MUST REINFORCE ITS FOUNDATION, BUTTRESS ITS RAMPARTS AND SHORE UP ITS WEAK SPOTS.

AND SO AS AN EARNEST OF THEIR COMMON DESIRE TO SERVE THE ENDS OF MUTUAL DEFENSE, THE PHILIPPINE AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE RP-US MUTUAL DEFENSE BOARD HAVE AGREED TO REVIEW SO THAT IT CAN BE REVITALIZED, THE PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY UNDER THE AUSPICES OF WHICH VARIOUS PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN ENCOMPASSING CUSTOMARY SHIP VISITS, JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES, AND SIMILAR COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS. IT SHOULD BE STRESSED THAT THESE ACTIVITIES ARE TO BE UNDERTAKEN WITHIN THE ACCORDS OF THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY AND DO NOT ENTAIL THE NECESSITY OF CONCLUDING ANY NEW AND SEPARATE AGREEMENT.

OUR PLANS FOR SUBIC

WHAT IS REVERTED TO THE FILIPINO PEOPLE TODAY IS CERTAINLY MORE THAN JUST A PIECE OF REAL ESTATE. IT IS A PART OF THE NATION'S PATRIMONY WHICH WE HOPE TO CONSECRATE TO PEACEFUL USE AND FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE. THE BLUEPRINT FOR TRANSFORMING THIS MILITARY COMPLEX ENVISIONS, I MUST STRESS, BOTH PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT. TO BE PRECISE, WE AIM TO MAINTAIN AND SECURE ITS NATURAL ATTRIBUTES -- THE PRISTINE BEAUTY OF ITS FOREST COVER AND THE CLEAR, DEEP WATERS OF THE BAY.

THIS COMPLEX SHALL BECOME THE CENTERPIECE OF A CONVERSION PROGRAM THAT ENCOMPASSES ALL THE FACILITIES AND BASE LANDS RELINQUISHED BY THE UNITED STATES. WHILE ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO OUR TWO COUNTRIES WILL BE DEEPLY ETCHED IN THE TOUCHSTONE OF OUR LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP, THE SUBIC OF TOMORROW WILL ACQUIRE A UNIVERSAL IDENTITY AS A MAJOR GATEWAY FOR THE WORLD TO OUR SHORES.

THE SUBIC OF TOMORROW SHALL BE THE BEST MANIFESTATION OF OUR PRIMARY FOCUS ON THE ECONOMIC CONCERNS OF THE NATION. SUBIC SHALL BE A SHOWCASE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH ACTIVITIES, FROM INDUSTRIES TURNING OUT QUALITY PRODUCTS FOR EXPORT TO RESORTS OFFERING TOURISTS NATURE'S BOUNTY AND OUR RENOWNED HOSPITALITY.

I CONFIRM WHAT MAYOR DICK GORDON WHO IS ALSO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SBMA HAS SAID HERE TODAY THAT YOUR PRESIDENT SHALL BE YOUR ONE-MAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE OVER THE CABINET, OVER THE SBMA COUNCIL, AND OVER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVES, AS WELL AS YOUR ONE-MAN PUBLIC

RELATION'S MAN TOWARDS OUR OWN PEOPLE AND OUR FOREIGN FRIENDS SO THAT INDEED THE PROMISE OF SUBIC AND OUR VISION FOR IT WILL BE FULFILLED NOT TOO LONG FROM NOW.

ATTENTION TO SOCIAL CONCERNS

BUT WHILE OUR PLANS ARE PRIORITIZED FOR THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF THIS REVERTED TERRITORY, WE SHALL NOT NEGLECT THE SOCIAL CONCERNS THAT HAVE ARISEN FROM SUBIC'S EXISTENCE AS A MILITARY BASE.

FOREMOST AMONG THESE IS THE WELFARE OF WHAT THE PEOPLE OF OLONGAPO CALL "THE THROW-AWAY CHILDREN" OR THE AMERASIANS IN OUR MIDST. THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT WILL DO EVERYTHING THAT IT CAN, NOT ONLY TO ENSURE THEM WITH ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES TO BECOME EDUCATED, PRODUCTIVE AND USEFUL CITIZENS. AND I WILL NOT ALLOW THEM TO END UP IN POVERTY, MUCH LESS IN STREET GANGS. AS SUBIC DEVELOPS ECONOMICALLY, HOPEFULLY WE CAN PROVIDE THESE YOUNG CHILDREN THE MEANS FOR GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT.

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, HOWEVER, THE WELFARE OF THESE YOUNG FILIPINO-AMERICANS REMAINS THE JOINT RESPONSIBILITY OF BOTH COUNTRIES WHICH DOES NOT TERMINATE WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FORCES FROM THE PHILIPPINES.

THIS AND OTHER SOCIAL CONCERNS MUST BE DISCUSSED IN FUTURE TALKS ON PHILIPPINE - U.S. RELATIONS. WE WILL RELY ON THE AMERICANS' SENSE OF CIVIL RESPONSIBILITY SO THAT THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF THEIR STAY ARE ADDRESSED TO THE MUTUAL SATISFACTION OF BOTH PARTIES.

AS FRIENDS AND ALLIES, THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES STAND ON A PROMONTORY FROM WHICH THEY HAVE A COMMANDING VIEW OF THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE. BEHIND THEM LIE A LONG MOUNTAIN RANGE OF SHARED EXPERIENCE IN MANKIND'S UNENDING QUEST TO EXPAND FREEDOM AND PROGRESS. AND AHEAD WITH THEM LIES AN ENTRANCING VISTA OF NEW PROMISE, NEW FRONTIERS, NEW HORIZONS, AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

I, FOR ONE, HAVE HIGH HOPES THAT THE LEADERS, THE STATESMEN, THE DIPLOMATS, THE DEFENSE MANAGERS AND THE ECONOMIC STRATEGISTS OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE UNITED STATES, FIRED WITH A COMMON INSPIRATION AND VISION, WILL SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY BEFORE THEM TO REINFORCE THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP AND MUTUAL COOPERATION THAT UNITE THEM, TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENRICHMENT OF MAN'S HERITAGE OF DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM, AND TO BUILD A FORTRESS OF HUMAN LIBERTY AND WELL-BEING IN THIS CORNER OF THE GLOBE.

IN SUM, WE BID "BON VOYAGE" TO THE AMERICAN SERVICEMEN REPRESENTED HERE BY THEIR HIGHEST COMMANDERS AND THEIR AMBASSADOR. AS WE DO THIS WE ASK THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF OUR PARTNERSHIP ON THE BASIS OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION, SOCIAL CONCERN, MUTUAL SUPPORT AND DEMOCRATIC COMMITMENT.

LET US NOT SIMPLY GLORY IN HISTORY. LET US MOVE ON AND MAKE HISTORY!!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. MABUHAY TAYONG LAHAT. MABUHAY ANG REPUBLIKA NG FILIPINAS.

112592-0900-Roe