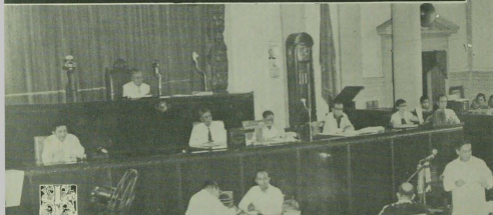


The Need for a General Perspective

By Honorable Eulogio Rodriguez, Sr.
President of the Senate

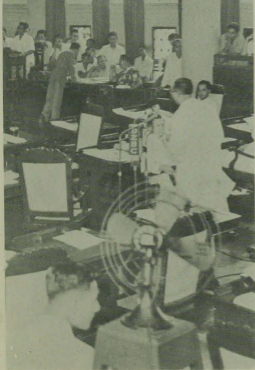


I SHOULD start this article with a few words of commendation for the editorial staff of the *Armed Forces Journal*. I understand that this issue of the Journal is being dedicated to the members of the Congress of the Republic. This dedication reflects due respect on the part of the Armed Forces for the duly elected representatives of the sovereign people. And this is the proper attitude for the military service of any democratic country to take, in keeping with our democratic

principles and our Constitutional precepts. It is for this reason that I feel that the Journal's editorial staff should be commended.

Our Constitution and laws, like the National Defense Act and other subsequent legislation, provide that "civil authority shall always be supreme." This is a general principle, and its implementation has been the subject of much discussion and argument, which sometimes become heated and impassioned. Although authorities have already come to a working ar-

Elder statesman points out the philosophy behind principle that civil authority shall always be supreme and the need to slant efforts with an eye on nation's overall welfare



arrangement on this matter, I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to express my own viewpoints. And while I am no expert on military matters, it is safe for me to claim adequate knowledge gathered during forty-six years of service to our people in both the executive and legislative branches of our government. I also have that broad perspective springing from experience, and more often than not, experience proves much better than any theory learned from books.

What is the philosophy behind civilian supremacy? What is it that makes this set-up the most desirable in our country? There are many reasons, but time and space do not permit me to mention all of them here. However, a few important ones would suffice.

Firstly, we need only to look at various South American Republics where the military services are allowed to become too powerful. We know of many countries whose governments are rendered unstable because their armies concern themselves not just with the functions of defense but also interfere in politics and even in intrigue. Instability in government always works to the detriment of the people, for how can progress and prosperity be achieved when chaos and confusion set in periodically? How could a nation be built on the unstable foundation of a government that may topple down at the whims of a certain segment of its people?

The Philippines has, so far, maintained a stable government, and we have not experienced *coups* nor major



Due respect for the duly elected representatives of the sovereign people is accorded by the military in consonance with principle that civil authority shall always be supreme.

revolutions except the Communist-inspired Huk movement. This is partly due to the fact that our Armed Forces does not meddle in politics, and it is impartial. More important, because it recognizes the authority of our duly elected officials who are the representatives of the sovereign people.

It is absolutely necessary that all governmental agencies work in perfect coordination and harmony towards one end: public welfare. The President is our Chief of State, and the function of coordinating devolves on him. He sets down general policies,

but in the implementation of these general policies, it is not humanly possible for him to delve into details. He just does not have the time for that. Hence arises the need for a civilian Secretary of National Defense to serve as the President's alter ego, having supervision and control over the Armed Forces. On the Secretary of National Defense, therefore, devolves the responsibility of seeing to it that the policies set forth by the President are carefully and correctly being followed and executed. He likewise must be possessed of a general perspective, so that he may

know exactly where the Armed Forces should stand in relation to other governmental agencies in the task of securing public welfare.

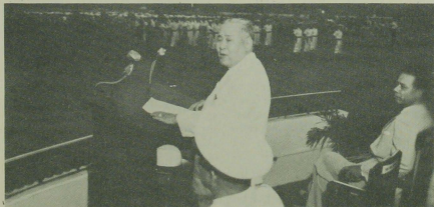
Take a general perspective, and relate this matter to the budget: It would be difficult for military minds to comprehend why, at a time when the growth and development of our Armed Forces is a necessity in view of unstable world conditions, cuts are being made on our defense budgets. It would be difficult to admit that there are other things just as important as, if not more important than, our national defense. But there are more important things which deserve priority. Presently, we have rural development to strengthen the backbone of our population. We have education, industrialization, and other activities all tending to strengthen our nation, spiritually, mentally, and physically. With these things, defense must go hand in hand. And it takes only common sense, and the

above-mentioned general perspective, to understand why.

As I said in the speech I delivered sometime ago in Camp Murphy, our soldiers rank equal, if they are not superior, to the soldiers of other countries in the world. My sincere hope is that, with the means made available to them, they will continue to perform their assigned tasks commendably, and therefore, continue to deserve the confidence and trust of the Filipino people.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hon. Eulogio Rodriguez, Sr. is a farmer, businessman and public servant. He rose from a humble farmer to head of various business and financial enterprises, from lowly municipal president to president of the Nacionalista Party and of the Philippine Senate. He was also elected governor of Rizal province in 1916.



Author is shown addressing military personnel in Camp Murphy during recent parade and review held in honor of him and other senators. Behind him appear Defense Secretary Eulogio Balao and Lt. Gen. Jesus Vargas, AFP chief of staff.