

"We are deeply committed to freedom, to which we have pledged not only our fortunes and our lives, but the most precious of all things, our honor."

With these words, President Marcos allayed the misgivings of skeptics here and abroad regarding recent developments in the Philippines.

Providing the occasion for the President's reaffirmation of his commitment to freedom was the recent visit here of US Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, the first high-ranking foreign dignitary to come to the Philippines since the proclamation of martial law. It was Mr. Agnew's last stop in an eight-nation Southeast Asian journey to explain America's post-Vietnam war posture and to assure her allies of her intent to honor all bilateral commitments.

"No matter how short your stay may be here," the President told Mr. Agnew in a luncheon at Malacañang, "I know that you can feel the new strong fresh wind that blows over the Philippines, a wind of hope and of resolution. That we shall attain the simple things that have been in the books but have never been felt by us and these are equal opportunity, justice, dignity for every individual, the simple things known to every American but which every Filipino has aspired for. We dream of these and if in the immediate moment we sacrifice some of our freedoms... please be assured this shall be temporary and we shall seek normalcy as fast and as quietly as we can, as security and the safety of our Republic will allow."

It was Mr. Agnew's second visit to the Philippines. The first was in 1969 when he attended the second inaugural of President Marcos. On his second trip, he saw for himself the dramatic changes that had been ef-

THE AGNEW VISIT

Watching with interest

fects in Philippine society, as well as in the rest of Southeast Asia.

"I see (a) turning toward an inner self-reliance," Mr. Agnew said. "I see the development of resiliency. I see the effort being made toward realization of the aspirations of the people, recognizing that if people are to be able to resist the forces of insurrection and rebellion they must not only be proud of their country, they must have a stake in their country. And to that end, Mr. President, we are watching with interest the programs that you have announced here in the Philippines."

The US vice president also praised Philippine efforts in fostering regional cooperation. He said: "Let us hope that the attitudes of regional cooperation into which you have contributed so much of your aggressive leadership in the ASEAN nations will continue and be augmented and burgeon into the kind of mutually protective and self-assisting force that will indeed make Southeast Asia a community of secure, free nations where the people have the right of self-determination."

Apart from the statements exchanged at the Malacañang reception, the two leaders held talks behind closed doors. The President briefed Mr. Agnew on the situation that led to martial law and the reforms instituted during the last six months.

The President also cited several is-



US Vice President Agnew and President Marcos: a bond of cooperation.

sues concerning relations between the Philippines and the United States.

One such issue is the Laurel-Langley agreement which is due to expire next year. The agreement gives Philippine exports preferential tariff rates and allows American citizens to engage in public utilities as well as exploit natural resources of the Philippines. Nationalistic elements had described this as a lopsided accord in favor of the United States.

Likewise, the President mentioned the need for a renegotiation of the Philippine-US military bases agreement which had been a burning issue since the mid-50's.

Another issue concerns the long-delayed air treaty between the two countries. The negotiations, which started as early as 1965, have not gone beyond that stage because of US reluctance to grant reciprocal landing rights to Philippine air carriers.

But both leaders expressed the hope that, despite these irritants, the close relations between the two countries would continue. "Mr. President," Mr. Agnew said, "without any question the Philippines and the United States have a friendship that will endure. Working together let us hope that we can cooperate in the future of this part of the world."

AFTER VIETNAM

Era of negotiation

Most everyone in the world these days is in a talking mood. Negotiations, not armed confrontations, have become the new strategy for peace among big and small nations. On any given day, in various parts of the world, at least a dozen separate conferences are being held to tackle practically the whole gamut of human concern—from such highly delicate issues as mutual reduction of forces in Europe to seemingly trivial ones like what to do about whales and seals.

How did it all start? With the possible exception of Paris peace negotiations, which, although ultimately successful, proved a long-drawn-out affair, it was the historic trips of US President Nixon to Peking and Moscow last year and his meetings with leaders of the two other superpowers that seemed to have broken the ice and brought on a greater earnestness, if not cordiality, around the world's negotiating tables.

Those trips could even be assumed to have helped, to no little extent, in bringing the Paris peace talks to a successful conclusion. Soon after the summit talks in Peking and Moscow, the pieces of the Indochinese jigsaw puzzle began to fall into place, culminating in the Vietnam peace agreement. Unless something crops up to unscramble it again, the problem that has defied solution for over a decade,

divided America and prompted the decision of an American President not to run again for public office, and cost more than a million lives, may yet remain permanently solved.

As the world emerges from an era of brinkmanship, missile-rattling and often bloody confrontation to the era of negotiation, the months ahead will confront the world's diplomats with even bigger challenges at the negotiating table.

The challenges are as varied and as complex as the fast-changing complexion of what had become a multipolar world. Many problems are knotty and defy easy solutions, but even partial answers will go a long way toward easing tensions and achieving the goal of peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

The Paris talks that led to the Vietnam ceasefire did not end there. Since the signing of the complicated peace agreement last January, the parties in the Indochina conflict had been holding further meetings to untangle the remaining problems affecting Vietnam and the rest of Indochina. Last month, a separate peace agreement was forged among warring factions in Laos, the second country in the Indochinese trilogy. Efforts toward the same objective are being exerted in Cambodia.

In Paris, representatives of 12 nations and the United Nations have

signed an agreement guaranteeing the hard-won peace in Vietnam. This was done in the hope of preventing the ceasefire from exploding again into all-out war. In South Vietnam itself, representatives of the administration of President Nguyen Van Thieu are meeting with Vietcong delegates on a possible political settlement in that country.

The US, for its part, is holding talks with Hanoi officials on the matter of rehabilitation. As part of the ceasefire agreement, the US will give some \$7.5 billion for the reconstruction of both North and South Vietnam.

Other conferences are being conducted in other world capitals, some of them by regional alliances, to assess the situation in Southeast Asia and draw up plans for the future. Among the conferences scheduled are those of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Bangkok, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), and the Asian-Pacific Council (ASPAC). The last one faces an uncertain future because of the loss of interest, if not the planned withdrawal, of at least three members.

On another plane, Russia and the United States met again in Geneva to resume their Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), a follow-up to last year's agreement on the limitation of nuclear weapons.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Soviet Union met recently to discuss the proposed Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) in Central Europe.

And the groundwork is being laid for a conference on European cooperation and security, which will run parallel to the MBFR talks.

In yet another part of the world, efforts of the United States and Russia to bring the Israelis and Arabs together may bear fruit. After Vietnam, the need for a settlement of the Middle East problem occupies high priority on the world agenda.

Equally important conferences on other world issues are going on or are on the drawing boards.

The conference on the future of the world's seabeds opened this month at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The Philippines, together with other archipelago-states, are fighting hard to retain sovereignty over the seas around and between their islands.

Other meetings include bilateral or multilateral negotiations on such subjects as the environment, ocean pollution, exchange of meteorological knowledge, rules against air piracy, war on narcotics, enforcement of copyrights, international fishing grounds, and conservation of wild life.

Finally, there are the on-going or proposed conferences on economic and related matters: the current monetary crisis that resulted in the devaluation of the dollar and the floating of certain currencies; economic aid to developing nations; and the tapping of sources of energy and other natural resources to make life more comfortable and manageable for a fast-growing world population.