

It has been six months since the start of a vigorous program of renewal and reform in the Philippines, and the rest of the world, after its initial reaction of surprise, is now viewing the changes in a more kindly light. For several months now, a massive influx of tourists and investors has been noted. Their coming here cannot but be suggestive of a recognition of the political, social and economic stability that the country has achieved.

In the not-too-distant past, foreigners shied away from the Philippines, discouraged by many negative factors that no doubt made them conclude this was not the place to venture in. The situation was not helped any by the unsavory publicity in the media and the pronouncements of those who did nothing but foment despair and deflect the bearings of a nation struggling valiantly to move forward.

Now, the picture has changed. A timely and decisive action to "save the Republic and reform society" on the part of the President has brought about profound changes that could not be attained for decades under the old social and political framework. Lawlessness has been effectively curbed, graft and corruption eliminated, a new sense of order and discipline now permeates the nation and, above all, the government has succeeded in giving direction and meaning to the movement of the Philippines as a young, developing country.

For their part, the Filipino people have responded admirably well to the challenge posed by the leadership to recast their outlook and their attitudes and to take part actively in the overall task of shaping their country's future. The result is manifested not only in the refreshing physical changes in the cities and the villages, but in the moral transformation that now sets the quality of public and private life.

The Administration's determination to effect reforms, with the all-out support of the people, has enabled the country to surge forward and start attaining the goals the country has set for itself.

Aware of the wholesome and invigorating atmosphere now prevailing in the country, tourists have been arriving in droves, eager to see for themselves the changes since the historic proclamation of September 21, 1972. They do not leave disappointed. They receive the amenities of a people tra-

Carpet for tourist and investor



ditionally known for their warmth and hospitality. They also manage to see the natural jewels dotting the hills, lakes, and valleys of the archipelago, things they had only read about but never had a chance to see in the past.

Other visitors, of course, have preferred to train their sights on more than just the tourists spots and decided to give a closer look to the economy, the one vital indicator of a nation's solidity. They have not been disappointed, either. Encouraged by the stabilizing measures adopted by the government and the incentives offered to them, both local and

foreign entrepreneurs are investing or about to invest sizeable capital to help propel the wheels of business and industry.

Apart from social and political stability, the Philippines offers a combination of vast natural resources, a profitable domestic market, and a trained and inexpensive labor force — a combination that, in terms of attraction for the investor, probably cannot be matched elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Under fair and equitable terms, the foreign investor is welcome to explore the business and industrial opportunities in the country, help in its growth — and can expect reasonable returns for his effort, time, and money.

The incentives are many and varied. The investor, for instance, can pioneer in industrial ventures or engage in the manufacture of goods for export. He can also go into petroleum exploration, the prospects of which are stirring up great interest here and abroad. These and other opportunities, embodied in newly promulgated decrees and related measures, are comparable to, if not more advantageous than those offered by other developing countries.

The promotion of tourism likewise occupies top billing in government efforts to attract foreigners to Philippine shores. To develop this once-neglected phase of industry, the President has approved an integrated program on tourism and foreign trade, mapped out by the Department of Trade and Tourism and geared to harmonize with the overall development program drawn up by the National Economic and Development Authority. Simultaneous with the adoption of this program is the creation of a single tourism body — the Philippine Tourism Commission — to solidify the efforts of both the government and the private sector in carrying out tourism plans.

With these positive steps, the Philippine government is confident that the stage has been set for a more vigorous activity in two significant fields — tourism and investment.

The response from both tourist and investor has been highly encouraging. And it is convincingly shown by the marked increase in their arrivals the past few weeks and months.

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

'Kamagong' concept

(Excerpts from the speech of President Marcos delivered at the 76th foundation anniversary of the Philippine Army at Fort Bonifacio on March 22.)

Today, 180 days after I commanded the Armed Forces of the Philippines to help build a New Socie-

"The welfare of the people is the sole purpose of all the governments on earth. The people are all in all: blood and life, wealth and strength — everything is for the people." — Andres Bonifacio

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ty, I am convinced more than ever that the military is one of the potent forces for peace and development in our society. We have all seen what the army can do to prepare the ground for solid and rapid economic growth. The commitment and the devotion of the army to the goals of the New Society stem, I think, from its unquenchable idealism.

But just as we are well on our way towards achieving our objectives, our efforts are threatened by the divisive work of rebels in Mindanao. While this problem in the South need not set back our timetable for development, it should serve to remind us that we must remain always vigilant and alert because the enemies of the state are bent on destroying everything that we have built or seek to build. They continuously subvert our way of life, create disunity among our people and openly defy government authority by attacking not only government forces but also civilians.

I am, however, confident that very soon we will be able to eliminate the threat in Mindanao and restore complete normalcy in the area. I am equally confident that the army is now prepared to protect the country against similar threats in the future.

But more than anything else, what makes me confident that we can win any armed conflict is the fact that our citizen army now is stronger than it has ever been before. With the implementation by the Philippine Army of the Kamagong concept and the formation of the Kamagong Battalions, we are creating a strike force that draws its strength from the will and energy of the people.

The Kamagong concept may well provide us with the structure for organizing the Citizen Army that is envisioned in our new constitution. While we are just starting to test the validity of the concept with the recent employment of some Kamagong Battalions in Mindanao, I do not have the slightest doubts as to the outcome of this test.

The employment of our 20-year-old trainees, side by side with our regular soldier in actual mil-

itary operations, is the heart of the Kamagong concept. It offers the reservist the opportunity to apply the skills he has acquired during his basic military instruction, in actual field maneuvers, thus giving him the field and combat experience that would make him a valuable member of the reserve force. At the same time, the regular service is benefited, and this more than compensates for what the government has spent in training him.

In terms of military preparedness, the organization of Kamagong units gives the army greater capability to meet emergencies. Also, in complementing the Kamagong concept, we in effect harness the idealism of the youth in the service of the country and people, and in the process, we answer the clamor of the young people to be given a chance to participate more actively in nation-building.

To achieve more effectively the goals of the Kamagong Concept, I am amending by Presidential Decree Republic Act 4091, otherwise known as The Trainee Utilization Law:

A. A trainee, upon completion of his basic military instruction, may be drafted into selective emergency service for a specified period of time.

B. The draftee shall be employed in the same manner as any regular enlisted personnel and shall be entitled to the same pay and allowances a private receives.

C. A draftee who completes the prescribed tour of service shall be entitled to one-month separation gratuity and shall be given preferential employment in the government service commensurate with his training, experience and educational qualifications.

These changes and the continuing assessment, and revision — if necessary — of our national defense policies and objectives, enhance effectiveness and the responsiveness and readiness of our entire military establishment. It shall be our aim to seek every means to improve continually our defense posture. It is the only way by which we can guarantee permanent peace and freedom for our people.