

NATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND PRACTICAL INTERNATIONALISM

[*Extemporaneous Speech of President Elpidio Quirino on opening the First Conference of Provincial Governors and City Mayors since he assumed office as President of the Philippines on April 17, 1948, convened at Malacañan Social Hall on October 4, 1948*]

"I am happy to welcome you this morning to this my first conference with provincial and city executives since I assumed office. I called this conference so that we may coordinate our respective functions in the execution of the programs and administration of government.

Coordination of Activities

"I have diverted from the old practice of having the members of the Cabinet address you as guests. I want them to directly participate in your deliberations as my representatives so that they can freely discuss the manner of coordinating the activities of their respective departments with those of your provincial units. In this way you will have an opportunity to be nearer to the department heads and be able to deal with them more effectively and perhaps more successfully. I want you to discuss with them freely as if you were taking up matters with me for they are in fact the extension of the president's personality.

Pressing Problems of Public Administration

"My friends, there are many pressing matters that prompted me to call this conference. The Republic's first two years of life have been primarily devoted to planning, to blueprinting our program of administration. Although we have executed some of the policies we have adopted, there are still many which await execution.

"Many and varied are the problems before us, but the most pressing ones in my opinion are the question of peace and order, of economic development, of solidifying and unifying our country in an effort to make this an integrated, firm, strong and enduring government. In order to accomplish all these objectives, which are uppermost in our minds, it is necessary that we all contribute to the total effort in our respective jurisdictions.

Peace and Order

"Of course, peace and order is the most important of all. Without peace and order, without tranquility in our mind, without our fields and our homes, being protected, without our industries being safe we shall find it difficult to carry out our program of economic development. And economic development, my friends, is the key to the stability of this nation.

"In my effort to maintain peace and order, you all know that I extended amnesty to the dissident elements. I was supported by the party. I was supported by the Congress. I was supported by the Council of State. And I was supported by all factions. Public opinion today is unanimous for eradicating their menace to our enduring existence. We of the government did not fail. We have accomplished everything expected of us. I have extended to the dissidents all benefits under the Constitution. I have given all kinds of relief, specially to the peasants whose cause I have espoused. I have given food, I have given medicine, I have given clothing, I have given money in crop loans. I even gave them lawyers and equipment plus money for the legal needs of dissident elements with cases in court as those for sedition. I have given them liberty. I have given their leader more. He was given complete freedom to collect his salary . . . his backpay, his secretary's salary, and he even mortgaged his future salary; he received all privileges extendable to members of Congress.

National Solidarity . . .

"The social amelioration program was adopted after a lengthy discussion with the participation of the leaders of the dissidents. Even the leaders of the opposition were there, especially the right-thinking members of the intellectual group, the Democratic Alliance headed by Judge Jesus Barrera. Both Judge Barrera and Taruc were present when we discussed and adopted the social amelioration program which embraces all the measures necessary to relieve the suffering peasants. We are in the midst of executing this social amelioration program.

"But we have been obstructed by those who pretend to champion the cause of the peasants. The officials I have appointed to constitute the action committee to supervise in the field the carrying out of the 6-point social amelioration program are in constant fear of depredations and raids by dissident elements. We have

Greetings!

The publication of the Local Government Review should be welcomed by everyone, especially by those who need information regarding the administration of our municipal, city and provincial governments.

I wish The Local Government Review success in its chosen field of endeavor.

ENRIQUE B. MAGALONA
Senator

been able to induce the peasant to come down from the hills in order that they may be able to cultivate again the land they had left idle for the last two or three years. Many have returned to their homes and, I presume, lived as peaceful citizens for a period of 50 days. And yet, simply because of the menace of impending war some people, perhaps among them dissident elements, saw it timely to defy and wrest the government from us so that they can rule together with others, imposing upon us a foreign loyalty.

"Thus, the dissidents have gone back to the hills and defied the government. So what can I do? I cannot change the laws. I cannot promise dissidents firearms when the laws do not allow them to possess arms without license. Our civilian population is not entitled by law to possess firearms without license and I cannot, without legislation, extend a higher privilege to dissident elements so that they will call themselves the privileged class, demanding from us the disarming of civilian guards and the redeployment of the Constabulary and the Army.

"So what I did, my friends, is to give instructions to the Constabulary and all the armed forces of the Philippines to check this movement which is retarding not only the execution of our program of social amelioration but also that of our economic development, especially in Central Luzon, our granary. We need more rice for it is the staple food of the Filipinos.

"Now, my friends, I want to report to you that the question of peace and order has been altered. But it was altered, I think, at last, at long last, for our good. I offered the dissidents my left hand in which I placed the food, the medicine, the clothing, money and charity . . . everything that can be given them in order to alleviate their sufferings. I told them frankly on that very day when I went to visit

them in central Luzon two or three months ago that, if necessary, I would use my right hand . . . and God forbid that I use it at any time, because in my right hand I have the bullets. I told them frankly and I was sincere in telling them and I meant it. But they defied the government. The government must be respected. Our laws must be obeyed. This is the only way by which we can establish here a government strong and enduring, one that will live for ages. We are following this policy. (Applause).

“So, my friends, peace and order is the most important matter that we should have in mind during our conference. We are proud to have been referred to in international councils and conferences as a peaceful country. We have even been pointed out as a successful experiment in democracy. This being the only democratic, independent country on this side of the globe, we are proud to have enjoyed the fame of being one of the countries in the world that know how to maintain peace and order. We want to live up to that reputation by upholding the dignity of this government.

Social Amelioration

“The social amelioration program has been spread in the minutes of the cabinet as well as of the council of state. It is a program by which I think we can obliquely approach our social and economic problems. It is my great hope that if we can implement this program, carry it out, and execute even its smallest details, it will mean prosperity and happiness to our people. I therefore ask you, each and everyone of you, to be wide awake and clear the deck for the execution of this program by guarding your respective jurisdictions against the untoward conduct, attitude and aggressiveness of the dissident elements.

Economic Development

“My friends, economic development, as I said, is the key to a permanent, stable peace and prosperity. The whole world is watching the Philip-

pinos, specially those who are fighting and struggling and constituting themselves into an asset under the United Nations. The Philippines is considered as the depository of many varied and numerous treasures. We have the greatest mines not only in number but in quality. Our rivers and seas abound in rich wealth. Our lands, I need not remind you, are so fertile we need not exert too much effort when we sow to be sure of a good harvest. Our air is adaptable to international communication and is an obligatory point in international air travel. All the airlines are converging in the Philippines or Manila as an international airport, from the north to the south, and from the east to the west, or vice versa. International commerce is converging also in our country. Strategically located, the Philippines also has social-economic, commercial, as well as intellectual prestige.

“Economic development, my friends, is not alone in our hands. It is also in the hands of those who have been invited to help us develop our land. Many of them would bring in capital. Some of them would come with technical knowledge. Some would come with technical experience. Many of those who otherwise would be eager, and ready to come and help us with inspiration and perspiration to develop this country are now apprehensive that, because of temporary conditions in the Philippines, they may expose themselves to the hazards of unprofitable investment. So it is necessary that we maintain peace and order and tell the whole world that we are ready to cooperate with those well-meaning friends of ours from abroad.

“We cannot by ourselves and with our own resources, carry out the task of developing this country. We have to count upon sympathetic friends who will cooperate with us. It is nice to talk of defending our own liberties, of protecting our own rights, of not allowing foreigners to dictate what we should do in this country, yet this is nothing but mere talk. In the actual practice, in the practice of the world

today, there is not a single nation that can call itself sufficient and alone.

Need of Practical Internationalism

"We are not alone in the world. We are traveling along the high road of international life. We have our own friends and those friends who welcome us in their territory would also expect us to welcome them in our own territory. International cooperation is necessary not only here but everywhere. We are sending representatives abroad. We are paying salaries to ambassadors, ministers, and consuls to develop our international relations and along with those international relations is fundamentally our economic relations. So it is incongruous on our part to say that we do not need foreign cooperation in our national life. Sane internationalism, practical internationalism from the point of view of our protection . . . that is what we need today.

Capital and Industrialization

"We invite capital. Every Filipino citizen who goes abroad either to the United States or to Europe, or to any other part of the world, always speaks of cooperation, always invites foreign capital, asks foreign elements to come and cooperate with us in the development of this country. Let us make that good, but reserving those things which we need so that we may not lose control of our life.

"Economic development will be the main activity of this nation for generations. We are now only rebuilding what were destroyed during the last war. We need to develop this country further. Expansion and development need foreign capital. I invite everyone of you to be broad-minded at the same time that you are indisputably patriotic and zealous of our independence.

"The moment we secure the loan for which we have applied from the World Bank to finance our project of harnessing hydroelectric power both in Luzon and Mindanao, we shall inaugurate our program of industrialization. To think of a vast program of industrialization today may not be timely, but after the initial establishment of

hydroelectric power, we may expand in Central Luzon and in Mindanao. At the start we shall supply cheap electric power not only to populated districts but also to the mines, factories, and even small industries. Having done this, we shall be able to determine our next step. In Mindanao we also expect to establish a plant to manufacture fertilizers with which to modernize and intensify our agricultural activities. I am quite sure that once the Maria Cristina falls is harnessed, we shall be able to supply the need for fertilizers of sugar lands in Negros as well as ricelands anywhere, in Central Luzon, the Cagayan Valley and, perhaps, Mindanao as well.

"My friends, these are the three major projects of industrialization which we have in mind. We are no longer planning, we are ready to execute a well-defined program.

The World Situation

"But the world situation today is increasingly menacing. While people talk of war, while people talk of ne-

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gotiations and while people philosophize on what the United Nations may do—while present and imminent world conflict occupy world powers in general—one thing is certain: There are two powers who are restless, one represented by the White Bear and the other represented by the democracies which have united themselves in self-defense and against totalitarian doctrines. The situation has passed beyond the stage of cold war.

Unity and Integration

“I am not sure that, if war comes, the Philippines will be directly affected. There may be some advantages, some blessings in disguise, if war breaks out and we are dragged into its vortex. But it is always imperative that we unite and be prepared for any eventuality. We must unify this nation. There must be unity, there must be national solidarity and integration.

“My friends, the whole world has its eyes on us. The Philippines must be a successful experiment in democracy, not only to gratify outside observations but also to achieve our dream of centuries. To insure this result we must have a solid, integrated and united nation. The peculiar position of our country, divided into several thousand islands, makes imperative greater efforts toward unity. From the north, therefore, to the far south, from Batanes to Jolo, Cagayan, Ilocos and Pampanga, I appeal to every one. Forget our regional nomenclature and live only as one people.

“Of course, we cannot avoid speaking in our homes the language that our mother has thought us but we have already adopted the Tagalog as our national language. Eventually, we will solidify our nation perhaps by a mutual surrender of some of our regional loyalties in order to build it into a single and solid unit. I appeal to you to help eradicate as much as possible the traditional custom to recognize as closer to our hearts those who have lived with us together in the same region. Let us accustom ourselves to living as one united, integrated nation.

Winning Confidence of the People

“My friends, there is nothing that I wish to emphasize more as head of this government than the necessity of winning and strengthening the confidence of the people, not necessarily in the Liberal party nor in the Nacionalista party, but in the administration, in the Republic of the Philippines. We have been wont to consider the administration as merely that of the Liberal party. This is not the case. There are at least eight provincial executives who belong to the Nacionalista party. But once you are governors, my friends, you belong to this administration. You don't belong to the Nacionalista nor to the Liberal party. You belong (Applause) to the administration. Your success will be our success and your failure will be the failure of this administration of this Republic.

Official Integrity

“One of the things uppermost in your minds should be official integrity. Official integrity is the key to the confidence and trust of the people. Place yourselves in closer contact with the people. Watch your subordinates. Even a messenger in the mayor's office sometimes speaks for the municipal administration. The same thing applies to provincial government as it would apply to the national government. The humblest employee, the meanest laborer in the public service carries the flag of the government and when he besmirches that flag he besmirches its prestige. So I want you to guard against this possibility. Watch your subordinates, both provincial and municipal officials, so that none of them will go wrong. And I would like you to have closer, more frequent contact with the people.

Making People at Home with the Government

“In the past we constituted a group visiting far-flung communities in an effort to bring the people closer to the government. We must do so not only during election time because we want to show that we have the interest of the people in the barrios but also now because we want to know their reaction to our administration and the

program we have adopted. Our objective is to make the people be at home with the government. We do not only adjust ourselves to them. Let us see that the people adjust themselves also to the government which is after their own welfare, benefit and happiness. Frequent visits and contact end in intimate relationship, which is the essence of the program of winning the confidence of the people.

"I therefore request each and everyone of you to inspect your provinces, your municipalities, your barrios as frequently as possible. Take the people into your confidence, talk to them about your plans. Give them a chance to tell you not only of their wishes but of their grievances because once they get out of their system their pent up feeling against the administration, they will feel relieved. Give them a chance to lambast you under your very nose but, of course, be ready to defend yourselves and come out triumphant.

Time to Act and Serve the People

"Now, my friends, let us devote our full time to the question of administering the affairs of our people. We have been elected for four years. All of us will cease office in December, 1949. We only have one full year now to show our wares to the people. If in the past you have been quite indifferent to the interest of your constituency, we still have one more year to show our deep interest in their welfare. We are paid to administer the affairs of the government.

"We will make available to you all the help, all the available appropriations, all the available power and all the available privileges for you to accomplish your commitments to your constituencies. Never in the history of the Philippine Congress has there been appropriated more money for public works than in this last session. Never in the past have we appropriated more money for various activities than in the last two or three regular sessions of Congress. Verily, this administration has already prepared, almost completed, the basis of a stable and independent government. All we

have to do is to follow up the activities we have planned and started and with earnestness and aggressiveness, accomplish those which are in our power to undertake in order to make our program a real success. We have made all available appropriations for public works expendable immediately, specially in typhoon-stricken areas. We have given facilities to every agency of the government so that it can serve the people to the utmost.

"We have one good example. When the Camiguin volcano erupted we showed how quickly we are able to respond to the needs of suffering people. All available ships were sent there, and representatives of the government, bringing relief goods, rushed there. It was a miracle that without much fanfare we were able to handle that calamity in such a way that speaks well of this administration. I am proud of the intervention of all the agencies of the government in coping with the situation.

"I am quite hopeful also that a time is nigh approaching when the question of peace and order will be solved in the same cooperative manner, for it has got to be solved by all means. I hope the dissident elements will stop crying to the skies for benefits that cannot come except from the skies; that they will realize that this government is their government; and that no other government will dominate this country now or in the future. (Applause).

"My friends, I ask everyone of you to contribute your earnest effort in the deliberations to achieve the coordination of the programs and activities of this administration. You have one year, I repeat, not to talk, not to discuss, but to act. Immediate action, effective action, national action—that is what is expected of us. Thank you for coming. (Applause)

Compliments of

Hon. ROQUE ISLA

City Councilor

San Pablo City