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The President receiving US visitors and with awardee at Fall of Corregidor rites: "We must depend on ourselves."



SELF-RELIANCE

Translating a concept into concrete terms

"We cannot depend on anyone except the Filipino, and ultimately, when the chips are down, we must fight and work for our own survival and move and progress on our own for our country and people."

When President Marcos made this statement last week, on the occasion of Philippine Air Force Day and Aviation Week, he was reaffirming not merely a concept — that of self-reliance. He was also reaffirming a confidence he has always held, a confidence in the capacity of the Filipino to translate that concept into concrete, meaningful terms.

The President underscored the same theme on two other occasions during

the week — when he received visiting members of the United States War Defense College and in his speech at the commemoration of the 31st anniversary of the Fall of Corregidor.

Indeed, it was self-reliance that carried the nation through the stormy last quarter of 1972. It is this same concept that sets the tone for the current reformation program in the Philippines.

Since early last year, the nation was in the throes of a violent upheaval. The economy was shattered; the masses were growing increasingly restive; leftist and rightist groups were challenging the authority of the government; law and order had become a mirage.

By September, things were fast getting out of hand. But the Filipino nation was able to pull itself together and, doing this, began making substantial gains in nearly every aspect of national life.

In his Air Force Day speech, the President acknowledged the help extended by allies, including the United States and members of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, but he said no people could become strong if they depended on any other power.

The statement was directed both to the Filipino soldier in particular and to the entire nation in general.

He said it was necessary for the Filipino people to realize that they could not continue to depend on their allies or any agreement, "military or otherwise."

"We must depend on ourselves alone," he said.

Depending on themselves and making the most of their limited resources, the Filipino nation, through a democratic revolution, succeeded in quelling the communist and rightist rebellions and made significant headway in efforts to contain the secessionist movement in Mindanao, the President told members of the US National War College who called on him a few days after Air Force Day.

In addition, he said, seven basic reforms had been achieved in less than

eight months of martial law. These included marked improvement in peace and order conditions; bigger share for labor in the benefits of modernization; land reform for which P2 billion had already been set aside; economic development; educational reforms; and increased social services such as the implementation of the Medicare program.

"These reforms," the President said, "had eradicated the valid grievances which were the causes of discontent and unrest in the old society."

As for the Mindanao problem, he said, it could be handled by the country itself and would not necessitate foreign assistance.

He told the War College members that the Philippines was maintaining a posture of self-reliance and had initiated negotiations regarding US bases in the country.

In his Air Force Day and Aviation Week speech, the President said he was encouraging the concept of self-reliance initiated by the Armed Forces and the Department of National Defense, "to make the nation move forward and attain progress on the basis of our limited resources."

It was in the same spirit, the President said, that the people in Mindanao, both Muslims and Christians, had asked to be armed in order to protect themselves against the insurgents. In Cotabato alone, some 24,000 civilians asked that they be armed, but although only one-half could be given arms, they were enough "to turn the tide of battle in favor of the government."

Self-reliance is the underlying concept in other areas of Philippine life. The various socio-economic programs of the government today are aimed at the goal of making the country move forward on the basis of its own strength. Thus, while foreign investments are encouraged — and, indeed, there are far more incentives today than were available before — the main responsibility for attaining progress lies in the nation itself.

And the country is doubling its ef-

forts to make full use of its own local resources.

Through the tax amnesty decrees, the Philippines realized an additional income of P830 million, which means more funds for economic and social development projects. To liberate the small farmers and to bail them out from centuries of poverty, the President, in one of his latest moves, ordered the development of Mindanao swamplands into family-sized fishponds for lease to people in the region. The land reform program, now being implemented all over the country, is designed not only to give land to the landless but also to increase agricultural production and further bolster the Philippine economy, ultimately bringing about a better life for all.

Also geared toward the same ultimate objective are such measures as the overhauling of the educational system, dispersal of industries, manpower training programs, and updating of labor laws to meet the needs of present-day society.

Along with his reaffirmation of the concept of self-reliance, the President cited the continuing challenges faced by the Filipino nation.

"The professed solutions to the problems confronting our nation are often easier said than done," he said.

"But it is action, deeds that are needed. There is no other time in our history than the present for men of action to come forward, men who can deliver the goods when it is needed and where it is needed."

More than ever, he exuded confidence that Filipino could "deliver the goods."

He said: "The Philippines can and will attain its rightful place in the community of nations. The Filipino has the genius and the will to gain the forefront in leadership in this part of the world. But we must begin by meeting the challenges within our own country, by using our patience, our energies, our will, our courage, to change the course of our nation."

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