

Document

We oppose the latest coup attempt because it means "jumping from the frying pan into the fire". The coup forces led by Gringo Honasan represent the restoration of repressive rule, which Philippine and world history have already proven to be a failure in promoting the welfare of the people.

If, as some say, things are worse under Cory than they were under Marcos, we say things under Gringo can only be worse than now. He does not represent a credible alternative to Cory. So with the political and business leaders behind him. He has no clear and viable program of government. What is clear, though, is that they resorted to the gun in their attempt to grab power.

This is not to say that we necessarily support Cory. The Filipino people deserve more than "the lesser of two evils". In fact, Cory has to share the blame for the continuing mischief of Gringo. Among her failures is her inability to institute military reform and re-education. Another failure is her reliance on one faction of the military instead of people's power.

The Cory government cannot even defend itself against a coup attempt without US support -- which shows who the real power is. That all these events happened in the advent of the bases talks can only mean concessions to the US.

It is the bases that are the touchstones and primary source of US intervention in the Philippines. And it is this intervention that maintains the continuing domination by the US -- actually one of the roots of the mess our country is in.

US intervention during the coup attempt, even though at the request of the Cory government, has set a dangerous precedent in the same way that RAM set the dangerous precedent of military intervention in our political affairs. Next time, US intervention may be against the Cory government.

More than half-way through Cory's term, it is clear that her government has failed to effect redistributive justice and poverty alleviation, to break elitism and power monopoly, and to create the environment for peace and development. In other words, conservative democracy has again proven inadequate for the full democratization of the country's political and economic structures.

Which is why the people are beginning to think in terms of alternatives. One alternative is outright fascism like Gringo's. This we reject. The other is more progressive and democratic as it is built on an alternative agenda for peace, pluralism and progress. And this we support and work for. This agenda must be translated into a platform of national unity wherein all sectors will find a stake and which promises realistic chances of success with the least social and human cost.

What does it take to push this agenda? In the final analysis, only a broad national consensus. The last time there was such a consensus was in February 1986. Much has been said about the people power revolution showing the way for Eastern Europe of 1989. Perhaps, it is time that the Philippines learned from Eastern Europe.

There is no substitute for building a new consensus around a credible and effective alternative. In this way, we do not just react to events like in the latest coup attempt, we are also able to intervene in our nation's destiny and provide it with direction.

There is no substitute for the people's intervention whereby they grasp the destiny of their country and achieve control over the conditions that determine their lives. And people's intervention should lead to people's empowerment -- the process of transferring political and economic power from the elite to the masses. This, and not a power grab by way of a coup, is what this country needs.

No to coup d'etat! Yes to people's empowerment!

NagaPopDem (Naga for Popular Democracy)

1 December 1989