



## The Liberal Party: Its Program and Vision

*or how politically mature can a Liberal be?*

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### Guest Speakers:

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### Discussants:

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**PROF. ALEXANDER R. MAGNO** (Acting Director, Third World Studies Center): This afternoon, we are privileged by the presence of one of the outstanding members of the second oldest political party in the country, the Liberal Party (LP).

Our speaker began his political career as the youngest councilor of the city of Manila; the youngest member of the Cabinet in 1965; the youngest executive secretary in 1969, at the age of thirty-two; the only senator of the Nacionalista Party (NP) to survive the LP senatorial victory in 1971; a candidate of the *Lakas ng Bayan* (Laban: "Strength of the Nation") in 1978; a Cabinet member in 1976; and a senator from 1987 to the present.



What sums up his work as a senator is the result of the straw poll taken among senate and congressional reporters last week where he was ranked as the "Most Valuable Senator." He has been featured in several magazine covers and has acquired the nickname "Mr. Expose" for a series of exposes he made last year on a number of anomalies in the government.

It is my pleasure to present to you this afternoon one of the dark horses of the presidential race, Senator Ernesto Maceda.

**SEN. ERNESTO MACEDA:** I guess the fact is that Sen. Jovito Salonga, the president of the LP, was the one first invited to come here and



Liberal Party founder Manuel Roxas

of a continuing reform and revision in light of present conditions and needs. What is happening in the Soviet Union today is sometimes called liberalization. *Glasnost* or "openness" and *perestroika* or "restructuring" are the current manifestations of liberalization and democratization of Soviet society.

The LP was founded in 1945, and the founder and first president was Manuel Roxas. So I guess it is appropriate that we now go to Roxas's definition of a liberal.

At the LP convention in January 1947, Roxas defined what it meant to be liberal:

I would define a liberal as one who fights hard for what he believes in, but concedes to those who disagree with him. The right to fight in a like manner as long as they are fair. The true liberal believes that there is such a thing as truth, and it can best be determined in a free and open contest for the allegiance of men's minds. The true liberal believes that while the people may not always be right, they are usually right. And that in the end, if the people are given free reign to choose and select, righteousness, truth, and justice will prevail. A true liberal believes in progress towards the goals of peace, justice, and freedom. He believes in the greatest good for the greatest number. He believes that man can be led to happiness and prosperity, but neither terrorized or driven towards these goals.

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*"The true liberal believes that there is such a thing as truth which can best be determined in a free and open contest for the allegiance of men's minds."*

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since he was unable to make it, I was chosen to take his place. I guess that is the role I have to accustom myself to in the LP. If Salonga is not available, maybe, I will be the one chosen to take his place.

We can start by quoting Salonga:

The word liberal which is derived from the Latin term *liberalis*, meaning suitable for a free man, is usually employed to characterize an individual who is broad-minded, tolerant, generous, or open-handed. This is the opposite of one who is narrow-minded, extremely traditional or conservative. From this concept, we derive the term liberalism, a political philosophy based on the belief in progress, the essential goodness of man, his desire for freedom and his capability of exercising rational choice. Therefore, liberals all over the world have some common basic ideas though they may differ with respect to other things.

For your information, there is a Liberal Party International to which the Philippine LP belongs. And as you know, in almost all the advanced developed countries, there is an LP. The common basic ideas are among others: that every person wants to be free, that he is capable of exercising rational free choice, and that major institutions of the society must admit

As you know, besides Roxas there have been Liberal presidents, namely, Elpidio Quirino and Diosdado Macapagal. Of course, the LP is usually proud to say that before he defected to the NP, Magsaysay was a Liberal. And for whatever it may be worth, before Marcos transferred to the NP, Marcos was also a part of the LP.

Now, I guess we will have to leave as much time to the open forum rather than go into all of these specifics. At the open forum, Dean Wilacorta and Mr. Eli Quinto will have a chance also to focus on certain facets.

I just joined the LP a year ago so I am not the best authority on the party so I am playing safe by reading from the bible of the LP. According to this bible, the question that you usually ask is, "What makes the LP different from the other parties?" It answers that LP has seven distinctive features:

First, the LP is freedom-loving and liberal in the truest sense of the word. Liberals are

per-mind-ed because they believe that per-sons want to be free and capable of exercising personal free choice. What happened at Tiananmen Square in June 4, 1989, where intolerant and insecure leaders ordered the army to slaughter thousands of young students who were demanding freedom, democracy, and an end to official corruption is the exact opposite of the spirit of liberalism. Liberals believe in the right of man to be free and to have a say in his own governance.

Second, in terms of actual performance, the LP has an untarnished record of opposition to dictatorship and one-man rule. To its last credit, the LP never compromised to Marxism-Leninism and to Marcos's corrupt and repressive dictatorship. Many of its leaders preferred to suffer persecution, imprisonment, or even death, rather than collaborate with Mr. Marcos. This explains why the LP has a long list of martyrs and heroes in the nation's roll of honor. Among them are its own secretary general, Ninoy Aquino, its former pres., Gerry Roxas, Mayor Cesar Climaco of Zamboanga, and Gov. Evelio Daguin of Antique.

Third, the LP has a program of government that distinguishes it as a party of principle. Admission to the LP is conditioned by the applicant's adherence to its ideology. That is why basic orientation seminars have been held throughout the country. Once an applicant is admitted into the LP, he is expected to remain

and maintain loyalty to its tenets. From thereon, he is not expected to be, specially if he came from another party, a political turncoat.

Fourth, the LP is pro-people, and therefore, pro-poor. Around sixty to seventy percent of our population is marred by poverty. The LP program of government says that the party favors an open pluralist democratic society; with a government and economic system that will serve the priorities and interests of the overwhelming majority of our people.

Since food is the first problem of a hungry, malnourished people, all efforts should be exerted to develop food production. Rural employment and food production projects should be launched; and trade and facilities extended to deserving rural industry projects. Agricultural and fishing productivity should be encouraged. Essential industries should be rebuilt and developed.

The truth must be stated. There can be no meaningful democracy where the majority of the people are poor and weak. Hungry men

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*"What happened at Tiananmen Square, where intolerant leaders ordered the slaughter of thousands of students demanding democracy, is the exact opposite of the spirit of liberalism."*

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cannot be free nor can we have economic recovery and growth if we don't have political stability, and there can be no political stability without social justice.

Fifth, owing to our excessive dependence on external forces, the LP program is nationalistic. Centuries of alien domination and our inclination to think in terms of what is good for the family, the clan, the tribe, or the region, without much regard for the good of the entire country must now be balanced by a greater emphasis on the interest of the entire nation. Beyond this imperative, the party envisions a nation that shall be free from the domination of any external force or power.

Our experience under four centuries of foreign domination shows that the dominant power is primarily interested in looking after its own interests. In the real world of diverse and often conflicting interests, no nation will make it its own responsibility to safeguard the Filipino interests except the Filipinos themselves. The LP program of government very aptly puts it that freedom will not come to us by special delivery from abroad, whether Washington or Moscow, Tokyo or Peking. We do not and cannot deserve freedom unless we're ready to work for it, fight for it, and if necessary, die for it.

Sixth, the LP is firmly committed to the principle of local autonomy and decentralization. This will free local governments from the hold

of the national government and encourage them to take the initiative, be more enterprising, and less dependent on dole-outs, as well as induce them to govern themselves according to their own ways and customs.

The LP program says, therefore, consistent with the minimum requirements of the central government in an archipelagic country, steps should be taken to establish autonomous local governments which shall respect the rich diversity of customs, traditions, and ways of life of various groups and traditional or cultural communities. The proposals for the establishment of a federal government and a system of proportional representation in various agencies of government, merit serious studies and consideration in the interest of national reconciliation and solidarity.

Seventh and last, in terms of ideology and performance, the LP stands for a clean, honest, and decent government. We are uncompromisingly against graft, corruption, and betrayal of public trust. In the Senate, it was the LP leaders who authored and sponsored the code of conduct and ethical standard for public officials and employees.

In the LP vision and program of government, the meaning and impact of example are explained: "A free community that is just and progressive is maintained to a large extent by the witness of its leaders." The Asian philosopher Confucius once said a long time ago, "Government to be effective must be government by example." The head of government acquires a symbolic function in any society. Likewise, how its lawmakers and judges behave can affect the regard of the members of the community have for their government.

By the same token, there are key institutions in the community whose adherence to certain principles of conduct can influence the allegiance of the citizens to the basic rules of society. Structures and institutions are important. For this reason, we insist that they be just and free.

But Filipinos rightly tend to judge the quality of structure and institutions by the kind of leaders that run and manage them. What has happened to the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan



Liberal Party president Jovito Salonga



a result of the Recruit stock scandal, the case of Speaker Jim Wright in the United States, corruption in South Korea and China, and the plunder of the nation's wealth during the Marcos years, all these confirm the urgency of the validity of the new theme of the LP, "Clean and Reform" ("Pagbabago").

There are eight LP senators in the Senate; seven LP members in the House of Representatives; there are a few governors -- four, if I am not mistaken; and quite a few municipal mayors and local officials.

The LP is well-known for its nationalistic position on foreign policy and since I know you are interested in that, may I just end by referring to the provisions of the platform.

The LP proposes the following guidelines for government in foreign policy:

First, Philippine foreign policy decision should reflect our cherished values and aspirations as a people; and must, in every case, be based on what best serves our national interest.

Second, the Philippines must develop friendly relations with all states, regardless of ideology and move away from a relationship of dependence or subordination in relation to any state.

Third, the Philippines should support the United Nations and all international organizations.

Fourth, we should exert all efforts to strengthen our ties with other Asian states. The Philippines should cooperate in making Southeast Asia a region of peace, freedom, and neutrality, and in declaring the region a nuclear weapon-free zone.

Fifth, the Philippines should oppose the continued presence of foreign military bases or facilities in the Philippines.

Sixth, all arrangements of agreements entered into by the Marcos dictatorship should be carefully re-examined and reviewed from the standpoint of our national interest.

Seventh, the foreign service of the Philippines that has been the privileged sanctuary of misfits and unaccountables, particularly during the Marcos years, should be cleaned up. Appointment should be based solely on merit.

Ladies and gentlemen, I guess the specifics we will leave to the open forum. As I have said, Dean Villacorta and Mr. Quinto will be happy to answer any question.

**DR. OLIVIA CAOILI:** One who has studied the history of Philippine politics and government will be reminded that the LP was really just a wing of the old NP, and if you recall, there was practically only one political party in Philippine politics from 1907 up to 1946.

What was happening was often some token splits between factions within the party but these were very often based on personality differences. So you had the quarrel between the leadership of Quezon and Osmena; one representing the *Uni-Personalista* or "one leadership" view, the other representing the collective

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*"It is remarkable that the Liberal Party has indeed progressed to a maturing political party."*

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leadership view. Then they would reunite after elections until another split occurred over a specific issue. Another issue that was a basis of the split was the passage of the Hare-Hawes Cutting Act, whether the Philippine legislature should accept it as the basis for Philippine independence.

I was just reviewing these historical facts last night because I believed that since I had no paper to read and comment on, we should try to look at how the LP had progressed. To me, it is remarkable that it has indeed progressed to what I would call as a political scientist, a maturing political party, if one is to believe all the things that Sen. Maceda has just said.

In political science, we often talk about the types of political parties. You have the cadre-type party and the mass party where membership in the former is usually based on political conviction on ideology and faithful support of all that the political party stands for.

When the LP split from the NP in 1946, it was again over a very personality-oriented issue. The original bargain was Osmena would run for president and Roxas would run for vice-president, then after a few months, Osmena would step down and Roxas would become the president. After the war, it seemed as though the

one-party pre-war politics would continue. But it turned out to be different.

Roxas decided to breakaway. At first, Roxas and his group simply called themselves the "Liberal Wing" of the NP. Later on, they decided to call themselves the LP. And as Sen. Maceda has just said, they now have a record of consistent opposition. That is quite true. They did not compromise during martial law.

If one now looks at the platform that they are offering, it is quite impressive and I am also impressed by what he has just mentioned — that now, in order to join the LP, you must attend seminars and must agree to support the platform of the party. Indeed, this would be a very salutary development in Philippine politics.

For a long time, we have seen the switching from one political party to another simply be-

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cause there wasn't really any difference between the political parties. Now we can see some emerging differences. For instance, he just mentioned awhile ago that the LP is for decentralization that would maintain a minimum central control. This is very distinguishable from what another senator, Sen. Osmena, is now moving for. He is arguing for federalization.

At least, we can see an emerging choice in some of the issues but I would say that there are still many aspects of the LP bible which need to be fleshed-out in terms of a specific program.

One is also heartened by what he said that their platform is pro-poor and pro-people. I think this is very significant because for a long time, many of our political leaders have been deluded into thinking that once we adopt the form of democratic government, automatically, we will have democracy. In truth, we cannot have a democratic system of government if the economic gap cannot be closed. In short, a vi-

able system of democratic government must be based on an economic system where there is an equitable distribution of income. Because if you are poor, you hardly can exercise any choice. These are the points that I would like to bring to your attention.

Right now, of course, the LP is hampered by the fact that it is a very small minority in the lower house of Congress and even more so among the local government officials.

In this country, victory in presidential elections has often been determined by who controls the allegiances of those who will deliver the votes in the local areas. These are the mayors, governors, and the barangay leaders. So it remains to be seen whether the LP will be successful in recruiting people at these lower levels.

If they can, by the means that Sen. Maceda has just mentioned, namely, by giving them seminars and inculcating in them the importance of the party's ideology, and expecting them to really work for the implementation of this ideology, then we can have some hope for this country.

**DR. ALEX BRILLANTES:** Sen. Maceda said earlier that he had been accustomed to taking the place of Sen. Salonga. I wonder if this will include running for the presidency if ever Sen. Salonga decided not to?

I have some major questions that I would like to raise. This is related to what Dr. Coello said about the major problems of Philippine political systems in terms of political parties.

I think we are much upon agreement to say that there is really no fundamental distinguishing characteristic that might distinguish them. This problem is not really new in the Philippines. You have the American governor general in the earlier part of this century Governor General Harrison who talked about the absence of distinctions between the Filipino political parties; but he said this can be explained by the fact that they were committed to a single issue, that of independence.

But of course, the political parties in the Philippines were still not that different after independence. So, somebody came out with the explanation that it was related to the patron-client relationship that filtered from the national down the local level. In 1965, Manglapus talked



...the Philippine party system being one  
...two faction. When we look for differen-  
...we look for fundamental ideological dif-  
...ences. It was President Quezon who  
...oped that the real difference between these  
...parties was that one tried to get in and the  
...er tried to protect or entrench itself more.

...in this sense, with regards to the general  
...form read by Sen. Maceda, I believe none  
...as would really disagree with his, what might  
...characterized as, "motherhood statements."  
...ese are statements we cannot possibly dis-  
...ree with. What we have to look for when we  
...about pro-poor is how does one really  
...ationalize the pro-poor ideology?

The second point I would like to raise is on  
...cal autonomy and decentralization. This issue  
...very close to the hearts of local executives.  
...again, who will disagree with decentraliza-  
...? What we should do, perhaps, would be  
...ationalizing such.

...People have been talking about  
...entralization since the 50s and even Pres.  
...quino talks about decentralization, but we still  
...ve these very restive local government offi-  
...als who say there is really no authentic  
...entralization.

Vice-President Laurel was here last time and he talked not only of decentralization but its logical end, federalism [See forum on NP, pp. 60-78]. The platform of the *Partido Demokratiko ng Pilipinas-Lakas ng Bayan* (PDP-Laban: Democratic Party of the Philippines -- Strength of the Nation) is also federalism. But for the LP, we find a more cautious approach. I find it surprising, Mr. Senator, that a party that claims to be liberal, thus open-minded, is unable to carry autonomy to its logical conclusion.

The third major point pertains to that of reorganization. Every president who takes over always talks about the need to reorganize the government. Everybody talks about the need to reorganize: Quirino had his Presidential Survey on Governmental Reorganization; before Marcos, the Integrated Reorganization Plan which Marcos implemented when he established martial law; then Aquino's Presidential Commission on Government Reorganization; and now you have the Congressional Planning and Budget Office talking about trimming down the bureaucracy to twelve specific departments.

But who will disagree to the need to trim down the bureaucracy? Again, the more important question is how is this to be operationalized?

After the reorganization currently going on in the government, we can almost predict that when a new government takes over in 1992, the first thing that it will undertake is another reorganization of the bureaucracy. But the question is, how do we reorganize where we trim down rather than enlarge the bureaucracy? We have one and a half million government employees, and the figure is still growing! I think this should be addressed at the level of the party platform.

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*"Sen. Maceda said that he had been accustomed to taking the place of Sen. Salonga. I wonder if this will include running for the presidency."*

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Mr. Senator, you yourself were characterized as an outstanding executive secretary together with Rufino Echanova, Rafael Salas, and Alejandro Melchor. Now, one major problem that might be addressed pertains to the need to strengthen the presidency. When

Secretary Catalino Macaraig was appointed as the exec. sec., one of his first statements was that he will be the most invisible exec. sec. ever. And that spelled his doom. Why? Because the role of an executive secretary is really to complement. His job is to extend the reach of the president by going to different places and fulfilling different functions in the name of the chief executive. This is why the likes of Mr. Salas and Senator Maceda made it as successful executive secretaries.

I am not really sure if this is still within the scope of the discussion, but, what is your assessment of the performance of the executive secretaries of Pres. Aquino?

**MR. REX VARONA:** We all know the bad news, the Gulf War is impending. Perhaps the good news is that we are too far physically to feel the impact of the war. Worse news is that the economy is sinking fast. The worst news of all is that the 1992 elections is fast approaching and this could only mean, based from our experience with past elections, worsening inflation, spiraling violence, and all such similar stuff.

It's one good thing that we have the LP here to explain its position. But I have to agree with Mr. Brillantes that a lot of what was presented were incontestable "motherhood statements."

Therefore, the basic question is, as a people, can we see the LP as an alternative? What kind of alternative is it? If we are looking for a better system of governance or a solution to our economic problems, can we see LP as one of the alternatives for that? Personally, as I examine the party history, I doubt if it can present itself as a viable alternative. Are the programs of LP bold enough to institute dramatic and drastic changes needed to revive the economy and deliver us from the morass we find ourselves in?

You were talking earlier about a pro-people platform but what did you do when oil prices were hiked, when economic policies regarding import liberalization were undertaken, when the Aquino government essentially carried through with Marcos's programs?

Is the LP an alternative to our current problems regarding the US bases? Will it strongly and consistently pursue its decision regarding the bases issue? What is this we hear that the LP is softening up on its stand on the immediate removal of the US bases?



Do we see an LP that will redress our problems regarding graft and corruption? All parties say that they are against graft and corruption but it has been at least forty years and nothing has happened. Sad to say, the ones who promise to rid government of graft and corruption are oftentimes the very ones behind the anomalies plaguing the government.

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*"Are the programs of the LP bold enough to institute dramatic and drastic changes in our economy?"*

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We have had experience for the past forty years of an elitist and bureaucratic approach to governance and policy-making. Do we see an LP that subscribes to grassroots empowerment, encouraging people's organizations or cooperative movements? I am a community development student, when we go to the barrios to help the people undertake development, we do not get any support from these political parties. In its stead, community field workers are harassed in fear of upsetting the traditional power structures in society.

In short, beyond rhetoric and motherhood statements, can the LP offer a genuine alternative strategy, an alternative framework, and a





...ative personalities to implement its alternative program?

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** We shall ask the senator to respond to the discussants before we move to the open forum.

**ENL MACEDA:** I guess I will leave Dean Villanueva to respond to the statements of Mr. Magno. Let me try to respond, first of all, to the specifics requested by Mr. Brillantes.

Regarding the specifics of decentralization, both the Senate and the House have already passed their versions of the local government code. I guess this is the best testimony to the fact that the Senate is really committed to decentralization and local autonomy.

When I refer to the Senate, you must remember that the leadership of the Senate is firmly in the hands of the LP: the president of the Senate, the majority floor leader and the ranking committee chairmen are all Liberals. The League of Governors and League of Mayors have already issued their statements formally supporting *en toto* the passage of the Senate version over the House version.

To be fair, it is not surprising that the House, in its own nature considered, would be more reluctant to go into a more radical decentralization because some congressmen feel that by making the governors and mayors so self-suffi-

cient in authority and funding, they would no longer have to go to them for assistance. This would mean political death in the next elections or the governors themselves may run against them. I'm not saying that this is an acceptable excuse.

Senators, since we are elected on a nationwide basis -- this is probably an argument for those who believe in the bicameral system -- do not go on the basis of patronage but on an overall Senate performance as perceived by the whole country. It is our estimate, for example, that in the next elections in 1992, where you probably have thirty-one or thirty-two million voters compared to the twenty-seven million in 1987, the number twenty-four senator should get at least twelve million votes. In the last elections, Sen. Salonga, the topnotcher got fourteen million votes and the last senator got something like eight million votes. So, you really have to go on a public perception of having done well in your legislative work.

In the Senate version of the Local Government Code, we have, with the exception of the income taxes, estate inheritance taxes, custom revenue and tariff collections, decentralized fully all the taxing powers to the local government.

In the final analysis, eighty percent of decentralization is again money. This means we should decentralize to a point where the barangay, municipality, and province can solve most of its level of problems on its own authority and own financial capacity. Barangays, for example, at the moment get an average of P1,000 to P2,000 a year from the ten percent of the real estate tax collections. Maybe they get about P5,000 to P10,000 as an annual grant from the so-called bulk fund.

Under the Senate version of the local government code, the smallest barangay will get at least P115,000. The principle is adopted that in any fund or tax or collection, where the province has a share, the municipality has a share, which is the usual cut, now, the barangay has also a share, whether ten, fifteen, or twenty percent.

The local governments are given full taxing powers with few exemptions. These exemptions are necessary to at least keep the national government funded and alive, otherwise, if you give everything away, then you weaken

also the central or national government. We have to get that balance.

The local governments are also strengthened in their control, not only supervision, over all national government officials assigned in the municipality or province. Before, a provincial agriculturist will say, "Well, I don't have to follow the governor because I am under the secretary of agriculture." It is clear in the Local Government Code, with the outstanding exception of education, all national government offices operating in a municipality are placed under the supervision or control of the municipal mayor. Even the control of natural resources is now given to the local governments.

In the initial draft, education was also devolved. Then there was a groundswell from both public teachers and non-government organizations (NGOs) expressing serious doubts as whether it is time for education to be placed under the municipal mayor, which means to say that the mayors will be the ones to assign the teachers, to buy the textbooks, and to build schools. Just to show you that decentralization is not always that simple, there was a very clear public opinion that we cannot yet trust the municipal mayor and municipal governments with municipal controls over education in their municipality.

In the case of the reorganization of the government, I guess you are correct that every administration that will come in will effect some sort of reorganization. But this is also partly for substantial reasons. It has its own priorities. Though it must be admitted that another

reason for this is one wants to reorganize some of those public officials who campaigned against



the winning presidential candidate in the last elections and usually reorganization is the only constitutionally allowed means where you can abolish certain positions.

The LP, going by the statements of its leaders, has been batting for a simplified form of government machinery. In fact, in my experience in several Cabinet positions, the biggest problem of the past and present as well as the coming administrations is the government bureaucracy.

In some cases, it is uncooperative, and in other cases it is outrightly syndicated, as in the Bureau of Customs. The reorganization of government under a new administration will depend again on the personality of the president. This the answer one can give as to what kind of an executive secretary will be effective. It depends on the personality of the president.

Both Mr. Salas, Mr. Melchor, and I served under Mr. Marcos. In the case of Mr. Salas, his

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*"Once President Aquino chooses her candidate, her priorities will depend on what is perceived to be good for her presidential candidate."*

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style was, he would act if he was authorized. This was on key or major decisions. In my case, probably because it was when Mr. Marcos was campaigning for re-election, I felt that I should act unless I was expressly prohibited or disauthorized. Those are the two different styles of being an executive secretary.

You mentioned that Mr. Macaraig chose to be invisible, which I think was an erroneous decision. At the other extreme, Mr. Orbes chooses to be most visible. Everyday, he has an interview. He claims that he does not sleep until three in the morning, I can believe that. I used to read until about one o'clock when I was an executive secretary.

As a footnote, I was the executive secretary from 1969 to the first month of 1970. At that time, the paperwork intake of the Office of the President under the executive secretary was 30,000 communications a week. I would easily guess that it would have doubled by this time.

# THE HEIR APPARENT

...Cruz Aquino's  
...secretary, Oscar  
...to pay into public  
...and his name with a  
...to be in him to



Even if no law said that it was appealable to executive secretary, even in cases where law said that it was no longer appealable under the constitutional provision of control over the executive departments, any decision by department secretary, any commission chairman, and any bureau head usually was appealed by the adversed party to the office of executive secretary.

During that time that I had 30,000 a week, it was filtered through a set of presidential assistants and special assistants, about 300 would come to me everyday. So that was 300 a week, plus 300 more if I worked on Saturdays. This would be 1,800 out of the 30,000. Out of the 300 that came to me everyday, I would try to allow no more than ten to reach the president's desk. That is why, in effect, the executive secretary is the *de facto* president or the "little president" because usually, when it comes to the paperwork, he is the one who virtually decides what do and what not reach the attention of the president.

During my time, only ten out of the 30,000 would reach the president's desk. So, I had, let us say, 300 a day, and when it came to the executive secretary's office, specially if they were appeals on concessions, cases, and grant of franchises and licenses, the file would be very thick.

If you were to devote thirty minutes per case and you work twenty-four hours, you can only handle forty-eight cases. So what happened to the 252? The principle, "Justice delayed is justice denied" comes in. So, the situation was, in each of these 300 items was a small briefing sheet to which there were two to three lines which stated in brief the nature of the case. For

instance: "An appeal from the secretary of environment and natural resources dismissing regional director for graft and corruption - A. affirmed B. reversed C. for other action."

I would usually devote no more than five to ten minutes to one case. Now, you just hope that most of your decisions are correct because what happens is if your decision was incorrect, the prejudiced party will still howl and ask for reconsideration.

So it is not really a very scientific thing, but what can you do? You just have to trust your executive and legal assistants. So I would usually work from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. In three hours, I could finish those 300 items. But if you have a president who wants to know everything that's going on, then there would probably be much delay in the Office of the President and that's when Cabinet members usually complain.

I guess Mr. Orbos will do for the moment considering that he is given full support by the president. Unfortunately, he has only about one year and four months to go. What I am worried about is the pronouncement of the president that by April or May, she will nominate her choice of presidential candidate to support. If the president does not belong to a political party and is not running for re-election but nevertheless gets herself involved with the political processes for 1992 then indeed this administration will end up doing nothing anymore.

The only way that she and Sec. Orbos can hope to do something and turn around things for the next fourteen months, is if the president decides that she is not going to join any party, she is not going to choose any candidate, or

campaign for anyone. Because once she chooses a candidate and campaigns for him, fund releases, priorities, appointments, allocation of her time will depend on what is perceived to be good for her presidential candidate. In this case, nothing will happen.

**DEAN WILFRIDO VILLACORTA:** *Marahil kayo'y nagtataka kung bakit ang isang propesor na tulad ko ay sumapi sa isang tradisyonal na political party. Siguro napagkakamalan ninyo na mayroon akong ambisyon na magpolitiko o magkandidato.*

*Ako po ay sumapi sa LP hindi dahil sa ibig kong kumandidato kundi sapagkat nakikita ko sa partidong ito, sa lahat ng existing political parties, ang isang alternatibo. Sa palagay ko ay mayroong inilalatag na alternatibo ang LP at ito ay ipaliliwanag ko. This is a party that goes beyond motherhood concepts.*

*Unang-una, on the basis of rhetoric na lang. Pag-aralan natin ang plataporma, ang vision, ang programa ng iba't-ibang political parties, 'yung tinatawag na traditional political parties at makikita natin ang tumutungkad na kaibahan ng programa ng LP na ang buod nito at ang common thread ay iyong nationalism.*

*Batid natin na itong nasyonalismo ay isa nang gasgas na salita at maaari nating sabihin na siguro ginagamit lang ito ng LP upang maluklok ito sa kapangyarihan. Ngunit sa palagay ko, at kaya ako sumapi sa LP, ay seryoso ang LP dito sa binanggit ni Dr. Caoili na "maturity process." Isa itong partido politikal na hindi ibig na maging isa lamang traditional political party kundi isang partido na nakikiisa sa bayan.*

*Ang isang palatandaan nito ay ang pakikilahok ng maraming representante ng mga batayang sektor sa Partido Liberal. Marahil ay maisasali ko na ang aking sarili doon sa mga miyembro din ng mga political organizations (POs) at cause-oriented groups na sumasali din sa mga gawain ng LP. Miyembro rin ako ng Anti-Baseng Koalisyon Demokratiko (ABAKADA) at Civil Liberties Union (CLU). Si Congressman Chito Gascon ay pangulo yata ng Pandayan para sa Sosyalistang Pilipinas (Pandayan). Si Butch Abad ay miyembro ng iba't-ibang POs. Hindi pinipilit o minumungkahi ng LP na kami ay magbitiw sa aming organisasyon sapagkat naniniwala ang partido na higit itong magiging mabisa at makatutoo sa kanyang adhikain na maka-*



Dr. Wilfrido Villacorta

*bayan at maka-sambayanan kung ito makikipag-ugnay sa mga organisasyon ng sambayanan at sa sambayanan mismo.*

*Tungkol sa "operationalization" na naitanong nina Dr. Brillantes at Mr. Varona. Sabi nila, madaling sabihin na ang partido ay nasyonalistiko, na ito'y maka-mahirap at makatao. Mayroong mga partikular na programa at panukala ang LP kung sakaling ito ay pagpalain ng Diyos at magwagi sa darating na eleksyon.*

*Sa usapin ng ekonomiya, naniniwala ang LP at ito'y nakikita sa aming primer, ayokang tawagin ito na bibliya; being a good Christian. I believe that there is only one bible, and that is the Bible of Jesus Christ. Itong primer ng LP, according to its economic programs, kailangan ng renegosasyon ang ating external debt.*

*Ito ay napaka-halaga sapagkat ang lubos na nagpapahirap sa ating bansa ay ang mga utang na pinipilit nitong mga supposed leaders natin na bayaran. Hindi ba napaka-immoral na si Estanislao at Cuisia ay babandera pa sa peryodiko at sasabihin na kahit na raw magkagiyera at magkahirap-hirap na ang bayan ay itutuloy pa rin nating bayaran ang ating mga utang sa mayayamang bansa? Saan ka naman nakakita ng ganyang mga klaseng pinuno?*

part sa LP, *malinaw ang aming posisyon* at ang external debt ay ire-renegotiate.

We are also for modernization, industrializa-  
land reform, dismantling of monopolies,  
revision and control of multinationals, en-  
vironmental protection, improvement of the tax  
system, expansion of employment  
opportunities, and upgrading of wages and  
prices.

*The Liberal Party is a party that  
goes beyond motherhood concepts."*

sa sistema ng edukasyon naman, ang isang  
kabuluhan at makabayang sistema ng  
edukasyon ay kinakailangan, kaya ayon sa  
ang primer ay kailangan ng revamp of the  
educational system.

hindi pa po nagbabago ang aming  
posisyon with respect to the U.S. bases. Nag-  
karoon lang po ng konsultasyon at sapagkat  
ay liberal at pluralist, nagkaroon ng iba't-  
ibang pag-iisip ukol sa mga base ngunit ang  
position ng LP ay ang madaliang pag-alis  
sa mga base militar ng mga Amerikano sa  
sang-ayon sa ating Konstitusyon. Itong  
posisyon na ito ay bibigyang laman pa sa Feb.  
at 24, kung kailan magkakaroon ng konsul-  
tasyon na pambansa ang LP.

As a political scientist and as a scholar, it  
would be unrealistic and dishonest for me to  
claim that the LP is the panacea to all our  
problems. It is still a traditional party but it ad-  
apted itself to the realities of Philippine  
politics and society. *Kung ayaw natin ng isang  
magandang rebolusyon o military junta, ano  
magandang solusyon para sa atin kundi ang  
constitutional method of peaceful change.*

Magandang palagay, ang LP ay naghahain ng  
magandang malibo na maari nating hulugan. Pero  
ang garantiya ng pagbabago ang ating  
magsasapin, ito ay nakasalalay hindi lamang  
ang partido kundi sa sambayanan. Kaya  
magkailang na kailangan ng LP ang pagsapi ng  
magkaraming mga taga-UP. Kaya in-  
magkayahan namin kayo na sumapi sa partido  
ang magmatiyak natin na ang mga adhikain  
ang makabayang at makasambayanan ay  
magkapatid.

Perhaps you wonder why a professor like  
I would join a traditional political party. You

might take it that I have an ambition to become  
a politician or a candidate.

I joined the LP not because I want to run but  
that I see in this party, of all the existing parties,  
an alternative. In my opinion, the LP offers an  
alternative, and this I would explain. This is a  
party that goes beyond motherhood concepts.

First, on the basis of rhetoric alone. Let us  
study the platform, the vision, the program of  
different political parties, what we call the tradi-  
tional parties and we would see the striking dif-  
ference in the program of the LP, the core and  
common thread of which is nationalism.

We are aware that nationalism is a hack-  
neyed word and we can say that perhaps that  
the LP is just using it to acquire power. But in  
my opinion, and this is why I joined the LP, the  
party is serious with what Dr. Caoili mentioned  
as the "maturity process." It is a political party  
that does not want to be merely a traditional  
political party but a party one with the people.

A proof of this is the involvement of many  
representatives from the basic sectors in the  
LP. Perhaps I could include myself in those who  
are also members of political organizations  
(POs) and cause-oriented groups that also  
participate in the activities of the LP. I am also  
a member of the *Anti-Baseng Koalisyonang  
Demokratiko* (ABAKADA: Democratic Coalition  
against the Bases) and the *Civil Liberties Union*  
(CLU). Congressman Chito Gascon, I think, is  
the president of *Pandayan para sa Sosyalis-  
tang Pilipinas* (*Pandayan: Workshop for a  
Socialist Philippines*). Butch Abad is a member  
of different POs. The LP doesn't impose or sug-  
gest that we resign in our organizations, for the  
party believes that it will be more effective and  
truthful to its pro-nation and pro-people tenets  
if it will link-up with mass organizations and  
with the masses themselves.

About the "operationalization" that was  
asked by Dr. Brillantes and Mr. Varona. They  
say that it is easy to present the party as  
nationalistic, that it is pro-poor, pro-people. The  
LP has particular programs if ever it is blessed  
by God and wins the coming elections.

In the economy, the LP believes, and this is  
shown by our primer, I do not want to call it a  
bible; being a good Christian, I believe there is  
only one bible, and that is the Bible of Jesus  
Christ. In this LP primer, according to its

economic programs, a renegotiation of our external debt is needed.

This is extremely important because what really burdens our nation are these debts that our supposed leaders insist on paying. Isn't it highly immoral that Estanislao and Cuisia would appear on the papers and proclaim that even if war breaks out and the nation sinks deeper into poverty, we would still continue to

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*"Ang garantiya ng pagbabago ay nakasalalay hindi lamang sa iisang partido kundi sa sambayanan."*

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pay our debts to the rich nations? Where can you find these kinds of leaders? But in the LP, our position is clear, the external debt is to be renegotiated.

We are also for modernization, industrialization, land reform, dismantling of monopolies, supervision and control of multinationals, environmental protection, improvement of the tax collection system, expansion of employment opportunities, and upgrading of wages and salaries.

In the educational system, a meaningful and nationalist educational system is needed, so according to our primer there must be a revamp of the educational system.

Our position with respect to the US bases has not changed. What we had was a consultation and because we were liberal and pluralist, there were different thoughts on the bases. But the final position of the LP is the immediate removal of the US military bases in 1991 in accordance with our Constitution. This position will still be given content on Feb. 23 and 24, when the LP will have its national consultation.

As a political scientist and as a scholar, it would be unrealistic and dishonest for me to claim that the LP is the panacea to all our problems. It is still a traditional party but it addresses itself to the realities of Philippine politics and society. If we do not want a bloody revolution or a military junta, what is the solution left for us but the constitutional method of peaceful change.

In my opinion, the LP offers an alternative that we can invest in. But if it is a guarantee for change that we are going to talk about, this

rests not on one party alone but on all the people. That is why the LP direly needs the membership of a greater number of people from the UP community. Thus, we invite you all to join the party to ensure that our national and pro-people goals are implemented.)

## OPEN FORUM

**Question (DR. EMERENCIANA ARCELLANA,** Department of Political Science, U.P. Diliman). *Nais kong paunlakan ang anyaya ni Dean Vilacorta, vice-president ng De la Salle University and former colleague in the Department of Political Science. Medyo matagal na akong nagkukuro-kuro diyan sa bagay na liyan at pinag-aralan ko nang lahat ang comparative platforms ng mga partido at saka personalities involved and comparative records of each and I am ready to join the LP.*

*Gusto ko lang malaman kung ano na ba ang gagawin sa Metro Manila Authority. Paano tayo magkakaroon ng desentralisasyon kung ang apat na siyudad at labing tatlong munisipyo ay ganoon pa rin kalawak ang poder? Baka magaya tayo sa Soviet Union, or Soviet disUnion, na three-fourths of the resources belongs to just one constituent republic. Siguro puwedeng maitanong natin ang masayang mangyari sa ating bayan kapag ang isang yunit ay malawak ang sinasakupan at masyadong maraming pera at karapatan o kaya ay awtoridad na hinahawakan?*

(I want to accept the invitation of Dean Vilacorta, vice-president of the De la Salle University and former colleague in the Department of Political Science. I have been thinking of this for quite some time and I have already studied all the platforms, personalities, and records of each and I am ready to join the LP.

I would just like to know what is going to be done to the Metro Manila Authority. How can we have decentralization if the four cities and thirteen municipalities still have their extensive powers? We might end up similar to the Soviet Union, or Soviet disUnion, where three-fourths of the resources belongs to just one constituent republic. Perhaps we can ask what can possibly happen to our country when a unit has a vast territory and has too much money and rights or authority?)

**SEN. MACEDA:** Its good that you opened up this issue because this is the other face of

centralization. Seventy-five percent of the total tax collection comes from Manila. If we strictly follow decentralization based on every province's or municipality's resources and capabilities, one problem is that the better provinces, cities, and municipalities would be more favored.

The traditional explanation why you collect everything into the national treasury through a series of existing laws is in order to divide the collection so that all the localities would have their share.

This is really a difficult question. There is an unresolved issue here on policy decision. What should be given more weight, population or territory? Naturally, small provinces with big populations would say population. On the other hand, there are provinces that would say, "Our territory is big, the reason that we cannot develop is that we have a wide area to tend to, you spare us more fund, more people would come to our place."

But going to the Metro Manila Commission, I think the predominant view is that since it was recognized as an entity in the Constitution, different interpretations for the commission's establishment could not be accommodated at a point in time.

**R. ELI QUINTO:** *Nais ko lang balikan 'yung pag-usapan na kaibahan ng LP sa ibang parteng politikal. Nais kong sabihin na iba nga ang LP. Nais kong gamiting halimbawa iyong nananaw nito sa kanyang Kabataang Liberal.*

*Ang Kabataang Liberal po ay binubuo ng mga miyembro mula labing anim hanggang sampu't limang gulang. Sa aming pagsuporta, aming napapansin na ang mga kabataan ay umiiwas sa politika kaya dito sa aming grupo, aming hinihikayat ang mga kabataan na makialam sa politika. Kung kaya po ay nagoorganisa sa bawat probinsiya, lalawigan, o munisipyo at aming hinihikayat ang mga kabataan na kumandidato.*

We want the young liberals to assume power and share in the governmental functions. And so far, *maluwag ang pagtrato sa aming mother party. Hindi nito nakialaman ang mga programa at mga kandidato na aming itinutulak. At sinasabi namin sa mga kabataan na sa pagpili ng mga kakandidato sa aming grupo ay maglalagay ng mga kandidato;*

*at sa convention, tingnan ninyo ang Kabataang Liberal bilang isang puwersa na papahalagahan.*

(I would just like to go back to what was discussed earlier about the difference of the LP with other political parties. I would like to say that the LP is indeed different. I would like to use as an example its view on the Liberal Youth.

The Liberal Youth is made up of members from age sixteen to thirty-five. As we organize, we notice that the youth avoid politics, therefore in our group, we encourage the young to intervene in politics. That is why we organize in every province, district, or municipality and we encourage the youth to run.

We want the young liberals to assume power and share in the governmental functions. And so far, the mother party has treated us liberally. It does not meddle in our program and the issues that we push for. And we say to them that in choosing candidates for the LP, we would also field candidates; and in the convention, watch the Liberal Youth as a force to be considered.)

**Question:** What is the likelihood of cause-oriented groups supporting the LP?

**SEN. MACEDA:** It is still too early. Even the cause-oriented groups are still waiting for who will make it as candidates of the political parties.

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*"We want the young liberals to assume power and share in the governmental functions. We encourage the young to intervene in politics."*

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You know I started my political career when I was only eighteen years old. At twenty-three, I was already elected. I went through a convention. One problem is that in the convention process, it is also the traditional politicians that choose the candidates.

Even before, this was way back in 1959, we already suggested to those who considered themselves as better elements of the society, to join the political parties because the name of the game is, non-government organizations or non-members of political parties can only

choose when the political parties have already their candidates. Usually, they would end up saying, "Wala akong nagugustuhan diyan sa mga kandidato na iyan; puro sila bulok; puro mga walang kuwenta" ("I favor none of these candidates; they are all rotten; all worthless").

You should consider going through the process where the political parties select their candidates. If you do not want to be limited to the end part of the game where political parties have chosen their candidates and you have to choose which one and you could just say, "All are not acceptable."

So, I just want to raise the point, if you want to improve the quality of the candidates, you have to join the nomination and selection process of these candidates and this could be done only by joining the political parties.

**DEAN VILLACORTA:** *Makikita natin ang kalibre at paninindigan ng LP bago pa man ito maupo sa 1992 sa kung papaano ito tutugon sa krisis na malapit nang dumating. Dito ninyo makikita na mangingibabaw at titingkad ang papel na gagampanan ng LP sa panahon ng krisis sapagkat ngayon pa lamang ay naghahanda na ito.*

*Halimbawa, sa pagtatanggol ng ating kalayaan na binabantaan ng ilang mga puwersa. Makikita natin na kahit ang gobyerno ay nagbabanta sa kalayaang ito. Kung babasahin natin iyong mga rekomendasyon ng multi-sectoral consultation sa Asian Institute of Management — although I doubt its multi-sectoralness dahil puro mga mayayaman ang mga naroon — halimbawa, doon sa law enforcement workshop group ay sinasabi that the "No permit, no rally rule" will be strictly enforced. Doon ay sinasabi rin sa media "to exercise restraint to avoid being a divisive force in society."*

*Bakit ganoon ang pananalita ng gobyerno natin? Makikita rin natin ang palatandaan. Sunod-sunod at nasa lahat ng television stations ang pagpapalabas ng video ng kanilang multi-sectoral consultations, carefully edited, even with subtitles, summarizing the statements of the speakers. Parang noong panahon ng martial law iyan. Ito ay nagbabadya ng pagbabalik marahil ng awtoritariyanismo na bibigyan katwiran, ayon sa kanila, ng darating na krisis sa ating lipunan kung magkakaroon ng digmaan sa Gitnang Silangan.*

*Doon naman sa parte ng oposisyon, pinag-uusapan din ang pangangailangan ng isang strong-man rule. Somebody is being molded as an alternative to his cousin President Aquino because he is strong, decisive, and with managerial talents [ the person referred to is Eduardo Cojuangco - Eds ]. Nakakatakot ito.*

*Sa parte ng militar, whether the establishment military or the rebel military, we see the obvious tendency na i-prefer iyong military rule.*

*Dito natin masusubukan ang LP. Bukod tangi itong partido, kung ating pag-aaralan ang spectrum ng mga puwersa ngayon sa lipunan na patuloy pa ring nagtatanggol sa constitutional democracy. Napatunayan ito immediately after the 1989 coup attempt nang nagbuo ang LP ng isang kilusang tinawag na "Tin-*

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*"Members of cause-oriented groups have to join the selection process of party candidates. This could be done only by joining the political parties."*

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"Kung maaalala ninyo, nagkaroon ng libo-libong party members sa Araneta Coliseum sa early 1990 at binuo iyong 'Tindig.'"

(We will see the caliber and the commitment of the LP even before 1992 by how it will respond to the impending crisis. Here you could see the glaring role the LP will assume in times of crisis because even at this moment it is already preparing.)

For example, in defending our freedom which is being threatened by a number of forces. We can see that even the government threatens this freedom. If we would read the recommendations of the multi-sectoral consultation in the Asian Institute of Management - although I doubt its multi-sectoralness because who attended were rich - - for example, the enforcement workshop group says that the permit, no rally rule" will be strictly enforced. The consultation also says to media "to exercise restraint to avoid being a divisive force in society."

Why is our government employing such restraints? We could also see the signs. One on the other and in all the television stations, video of the multi-sectoral consultations are shown, carefully edited, even with subtitles,



summarizing the statements of the speakers. That is just like the martial law period. This forebodes perhaps the return of authoritarianism that will be justified, according to them, by the coming crisis in our society if there will be a war in the Middle East.

On the part of the opposition, there is also talk on the need for a strong-man rule. Somebody is being molded as an alternative to his cousin President Aquino because he is strong, decisive, and with managerial talents [the person referred to is Eduardo Cojuangco - Eds]. This is frightening.

On the part of the military, whether the establishment military or the rebel military, we see the obvious tendency to prefer military rule.

Here we could test the LP. It is the only party, if we would study the present spectrum of forces in society, that continues to defend the constitutional democracy. This was proven immediately after the 1989 coup attempt when the LP formed a movement called *Tindig* ["Stand Up"]. If you can remember, there were thousands of party members in the Araneta Coliseum in early 1990 and they formed the *Tindig*.)

**DR. BRILLANTES:** Why did you join the LP and why did you join it only last year?

**SEN. MACEDA:** Well, when I ran for the Senate, I was a member of the *Lakas ng Bansa*. With apologies to no one, I felt that the leadership of *Lakas ng Bansa* had junked me in the last elections, so when the *Lakas ng Bansa* was reorganized into the LDP, I opted not to join and in effect, became an independent for one year.

Now it was the fact that the leadership of the Senate was in the hands of the LP. I did not believe in Vice-Pres. Laurel and Sen. Enrile, the leaders of the NP. Basically, I only had three choices: the LDP, go back to the NP, or join the LP. It was a very easy choice to join the LP since the people I was working with in the Senate were all LP.

I will accept everything that Dean Villacorta said with regards to the nationalistic features of the LP. If you look at all the platforms of the different political parties, probably ninety percent are the same. Between the LP and the LDP, and between the PDP-Laban and LDP, the

question on the US bases is the real outstanding difference.

Now, may I bring in another related matter into this. Part of the problem why the president and the Congress are not working harmoniously is because we have decided to experiment on the multi-party system of government. I have served in the previous Senate where there were only two lines: the majority which was the NP and the minority, the LP. When a party position is called, or when the president of the party says, "This is our stand," more or less you would follow. There is discipline.

Now, the president, to begin with, did not join any political party. As of the moment, she declared herself not a member of any of the party, she therefore has no disciplinary powers

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*"Probably 90 % of the platforms of the different political parties are the same. Only the question on the US bases is the real outstanding difference."*

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and moral leadership as a party leader. It would have been better if she became the president of the LDP. She might have a better chance of getting the Congress to be more supportive.

I sincerely believe at this point in time, having served in the previous Senate, that I would prefer to go back to the two-party system of government with the minority having a shadow Cabinet, fiscalizing in every way, preparing for the time they will take over, and showing themselves as an alternative to the party in power.

Of course, you know the composition of those who made up the Constitutional Commission and I guess most of you would bat for the merits of the multi-party system. But the practical effect of a multi-party system is, how do you get some discipline and cooperation between the Congress and the executive when there are so many small parties or sectoral groups with their own agenda?

The reason behind appointing sectoral representatives is that they are expected to act differently from the traditional politicians. I think my biggest disappointment is not so much that Speaker Mitra and the traditional politicians

received the P100,000 bonus, but that the sectoral representatives from the NGOs also received the P100,000 bonus. Isn't there something disappointing about that?

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** On the problem of the executive and legislative cooperation, could the answer lie in shifting to a parliamentary form of government?

**SEN. MACEDA:** I am one of those who have always maintained that the system of government at this time of our political maturity is not that relevant. It really depends on the ability to govern of the prime minister or president, whatever his title is. If the president is weak, we can do nothing about it. If the prime minister is also weak, we can also do nothing about it. If we had a strong prime minister at this point in time, good, but I adhere to the view that we may not even be ready for a parliamentary form of government. Perhaps every six months we would have a fall of government and reorganization.

If for example, the minority had raised the vote of confidence after the December oil increase, the government would have fallen. If the minority had raised the vote of confidence after the "Borlotoy Building" was exposed, I think the government fell. I am not convinced that we are ready for a parliamentary system.

**DR. CAOILI:** I am glad that Sen. Maceda brought out the issue of whether we are ready for a parliamentary system of government because this is related to the maturity of the political parties.

When we have a weak president or prime minister, the system will be badly governed. That has some bearing on the party system itself because in the mature democracies where you have parliamentary governments, it is the selection process within the party and the commitment to a program of government and ideology that really shape the kind of leadership that they have. I am of course talking specifically of the British system where it is the commitment to a set of program and to the stability of the party that behests the paramount concern of the party members such that they continually review their ideologies, be there an election or not.

The political parties, even though they may never have a chance of becoming the majority government go through the motion of having

political conferences and selection of party leaders based on the adherence to the party platform and ideology.

Furthermore, the party platform and ideology are not just sets of general policy statements, but they have already specific programs prepared under each policy statement so that when the voter goes to the polls, it is very clear in his mind that regardless of who the leader of the party is, he expects that this party will push these policies.

This is something that we have not reached. We are still far from this. That is why I am trying to be optimistic; and as we said, we see some trends towards a maturing party system. When I say this, I am referring to the past where there wasn't really much concern about convincing people who intend to join the party seminars to tell them about the party ideology. All you have to do was swear to be faithful and loyal to the party leader.

If the party lost, you were justified to move to the other party because the concern was only getting political patronage. There is no concern at all about making sure that the party's programs and policies were going to be implemented. At this stage, there is an attempt and that is why I think, if this is going to be the trend, we are going to have some kind of political maturity.

I do agree with the good senator that if we are going to have a presidential system of government, inevitably, there will be a trend towards a two-party system or a coalition of two groups of parties. Otherwise, it becomes very unwieldy to come up to some substantive decisions and therefore, we will probably be seeking coalitions of parties that tend to have some similarities in some areas of their programs.

**SEN. MACEDA:** Just two short comments for the purpose of completeness.

In the more mature presidential systems like the US, you have an almost biennial review of platforms. As a matter of fact, when you watch the Democratic and Republican conventions on television, the platform fight is as important as the nomination of candidates. To complete what I said on the part of the process to choose candidates, if you want to have a chance to influence the political parties to

adopt the platform plans of the NGOs, then you should do it partly from within.

Second point, 1992 is shaping up like a free for all. There is no dominating party or candidate at this time. So there just have to be coalitions among parties and cause-oriented groups. Maybe as cause-oriented groups, you have to start considering an actual coalition in terms of who to support for 1992 and make that an intermediate step. If the party you support wins, some of your leaders may decide to join the party and try to further strengthen the platform of the party along the lines that you are thinking about.

But certainly, even in the presidential system, the consultative meeting of the LP two weeks ago is a part of this process of trying to

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*"Nineteen ninety-two is shaping up like a free for all. There just have to be coalitions among parties and cause-oriented groups."*

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find out eventually what kind of a platform we will have. And in the U.S., the fight between the conservative and liberal elements within a party is so strong that the liberal group or conservative group would usually decide as to the presidential candidate they would vote for based on the conservative or liberal platform of the candidate. Eventually, when we mature -- the U.S. is 230 years old, we are, since 1945, 45 years old -- the time will come when it would be not only personalities but also the platform of the political parties that matter. That would be, I would say, in about twenty years.

**Question:** What is LP's battleflag for 1992? What is yours?

**SEN. MACEDA:** Well, I think you suggested an answer there because initially, LP's battleflag, as in any political party, will depend on the standard-bearer. At the moment, this presumably is Senate President Jovito Salonga. Maybe you can get an idea of that on the kinds of bills passed by the Senate which had been pushed by the Senate president and either had a hard time passing the House or are pending in the House.

We passed the Code of Ethics and Conduct which took a long time for the Congress to pass. That is a Salonga-Saguisag bill. We

passed the anti-dynasties legislation which is still pending in the House. We also passed the anti-nuclear provisions, as mandated by the Constitution, and the resolution on the early termination notice of the US bases.

Considering that the Senate is headed by the president of the LP and that most of the senators belong to the LP, the record of the Senate is the most credible record of where the LP is headed. When the House came up with a landlord-oriented bill, the Senate had to bring it back to a pro-tenant, pro-farmer orientation. So it was a surprise to many that the Senate became the more activist body with the passage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law over the House.

As regards to my personal agenda, it is also dependent on Senate President Salonga.

**Question (PROF. RANDOLF DAVID, on leave TWSC Director):** May I ask a question on the U.S. bases? It appears to be one of the clearest positions of the LP. When Dr. Villacorta referred to that section, it appeared to me very unequivocal that the LP is committed to the dismantling of the US bases not later than 1991.

I would just like to ask Sen. Maceda whether in his view such a phraseology, as contained in the vision of the LP, admits of an interpretation that would permit a new treaty.

**SEN. MACEDA:** The Constitution itself provides that an extension can be provided for by treaty. My impression is that the LP leadership at the level of Sen. Salonga, the secretary general, assistant secretary general, are fully committed to a hardline policy on the bases. That is the predominant and majority view within the party. But as we are in a democracy, we have shades of that opinion. I'll be candid enough to admit that of the LP senators,

probably Sen. Herrera and I are more on the moderate side. Probably, it's six to two if you will count.

Let me talk first of my moderation. The party position is clear. My moderation is always based on pragmatic consideration. I think Pres. Abueva knows this. I happen to be the chairman of the defense committee in the Senate so I am involved in this. To take over the bases is one thing. To make use of it, or to make it a performing asset rather than a liability, is another thing.

In the light of what has come to us in the last three months -- the budget deficit, the cutting down of the budget, the necessity to raise so much funds for even basic services, I think it is clear that the government, within the existing budgetary revenue sources, will not have the money to implement the alternative uses of the bases if we immediately take over about eight months from now.

The possibility is for a build-operate-transfer approach or, as suggested by the Abueva Plan to sell the military camps in Metro Manila. Considering that we are a depressed market, normally big hotels, big realtors, big golf resort-type of operators would be the only ones interested in these camps. There is hardly any investor now that will be interested at this time. Probably, they will wait until a new president comes in July or June 1992.

The principal alternative use of the bases that was adopted by the commission was to make it an international airport with a surrounding industrial commercial complex. I was told the last time I was in Singapore, with all the efficiency of Lee Kuan Yew and the honesty of contracts in Singapore, that it took them over three years to build a terminal in Singapore. In

**PUGAD BABOY**

By **PM JUNIOR**



1.) The Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq to leave Kuwait is nearing, war might break out. 2) No, Saddam is clever. For sure he would ask for an extension from the Americans. 3.) How would Saddam convince the US to give him an extension? 4.) Get Manglapot [Secretary Raul Manglapus - head of the Philippine negotiating panel on the US bases] as his negotiator.

Manila, it is taking them four years to build the new airport terminal.

Probably under Philippine construction efficiency standard, it is safe to say that it will take us four years to build the terminal, before we could make use of it as an international airport -- if we have the money. If none, I'm afraid it would be unnecessary because of political reasons or whatever it is, wanting to take over the bases prematurely.

If we take over in 1991, we cannot build the terminal, we do not have the money, we still have to negotiate with the Bureau of Trade (BOT) which will take one or two years. Look at the Light Rail Transit, a very simple project and it is taking them three to four years to enter into an agreement with the BOT. In the meantime, we have seen how we have to agree to an unreasonable oil price increase and tremendous budget cuts so that we can get \$700 million from the IMF because we are in such bad shape.

Now, what do we get from the bases? More than \$481 million a year. The Americans told us that if we don't renew the treaty, they are not going to pay a single centavo so we have to give up \$481 million in exchange for immediately taking over in September. In addition to that, we have to face the lay-off of a certain number of workers and loss of businesses near the bases.

Is it really absolutely necessary that we insist on taking over? Even if we admit that it is our right to stand, and this is what I was telling the LP during the consultative meeting, we are not yet fully considering our present financial and economic condition. It is inadvisable to give up what we are getting from the U.S. assistance.

I am trying to look for a compromise somewhere in this particular issue. I am afraid that the present economic and financial situation is such that we would be in a worse condition if we insist that the Americans give up the bases in 1992. I follow the party line on no extension. I am one of those in favor of a five-year final phase-out purely for pragmatic reasons. And Sen. Herrera, who happens to be the head of his Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, and the labor unions inside both bases, naturally are not expected to adopt a hardline position.

**Question (PROF. DAVID):** When you say five years, I suppose you believe that after five years, we will be more prepared to take over and make full productive use of the bases. Judging from the way we have been conducting our affairs in this country, perhaps twenty years or probably a hundred years will be more appropriate.

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*"If you make preparation an absolutely necessary condition for deciding on our sovereignty, I would even say that we are not prepared for nationhood."*

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My point is, can you name me anything in our society that you think we are truly prepared for? Because if you made preparation an absolutely necessary condition for deciding on something as important as national sovereignty, I would even say that perhaps we are not prepared for nationhood. In this case, it would have been better to stay with the Federalistas and remain within the ambit of the US.

What I am saying in effect is, that if you made absolute preparation as a precondition for claiming something that rightfully belongs to us, I think that we can find very few things in our country for which we can pledge self-reliance.

It so happens that in the way in which societies run, the very things that we want to get rid of over time acquire some function. So, if you are asking as a prerequisite that you have another structure to perform that particular function, perhaps you will never have any dramatic change in society. I do not think that is your position.

**SEN. MACEDA:** My position is based on present day realities. My position is based on a big debate going on in our minds on how we are even going to survive the year 1991. There is a possibility that we may go into default anytime this year. That means a total economic collapse.

If we go into a default this year, which could be prevented by maintaining the \$481 million -- sounds mercenary but I'm putting it in the best way I can -- then certainly, I would have reason

to hesitate whether to support an absolute and unconditional decision that by 1991, the bases should be out.

I feel that within the context of my term being up to the end of June 1992, I have to help keep this country afloat. I am not thinking of five years or twenty years, in the context of how to survive 1991. Maybe it's not the right decision to have such a hardline position on the U.S. bases because of the transition this year. If this were 1987 or 1988, it would have been easier.

Maybe this administration is guilty of planning too late. Maybe the alternative use should have been set in 1987, maybe then the country would have been ready by now.

I would disagree with you that it would take us ten or twenty years to plan anything. I am just relating it specifically to one project, the construction of the airline terminal building. How can you operate an international airport unless you have an airline terminal? The runway is there. Of course, we have to build a second runway but the terminal itself will take at least four years. I just equated it with that.

**PROF. A. MAGNO:** Because time has run out, we shall ask the senator to make his final statements.

**SEN. MACEDA:** Only to welcome these meetings and projects. In fairness to the PDP-Laban, they are also handling seminars before entry to the party. The LDP and NP don't find it useful to have these kinds of seminars. Probably

from a political standpoint, they may be correct. You will find it difficult to get incumbent governors, congressmen, and municipal mayors who have been there for a long time to go to the seminars. They will tell you, "I have been winning for several years, you do not have to teach me how to survive as a politician."

I would just like to repeat that if you want politics and political parties to improve, those who traditionally do not consider joining the political parties, must consider doing the same; not necessarily to run but to help choose candidates and effect changes in the platforms.

After all, if you are an NGO with a definite agenda, I think that history and records show that it is difficult to achieve your goals on your own. You still have to link-up with stronger groups unless you happen to be an exceptionally strong group. Part of the route that you should consider is to go through the political parties.

The LP has a plus characteristic in the sense that it is a party with diverse layers and as the younger elements of the party come in, then it could really finally reach a level of maturity that is acceptable to Dr. Caoili and the others who are here.

So, those who would like to join the LP, we welcome Dr. Arcellana and all of you. We hope that in 1992, we could have a team in place with the integrity to govern the country.

*"There is a possibility that we may go into default anytime this year. That means a total economic collapse."*

