



APPENDIX 5.9

EXCERPTS FROM “THE PEACE AND ORDER SITUATION” BY FIDEL V. RAMOS, 28 MARCH 1980

This excerpt from a speech made by then Philippine Constabulary chief Fidel V. Ramos shows, unequivocally, that the country’s crime rate actually returned to pre-martial law levels well before the “lifting” of martial law in January 1981 (Ramos 1980, 241–46).

The Integrated National Police which has the Philippine Constabulary as its parent organization during this transition period, has also contributed substantially to the attainment of better peace and order conditions. An analysis of the crime trends for the past nine years starting in 1971 shows that while there have been, and continue to be many problem areas, there are also many bright spots. In 1971 we recorded a national crime volume of about 93,000 incidents, when we had a population of some 37.9M. At the end of last year, 1979, some 118,000 incidents were reported for a population of about 26% and an increase in crime volume of about the same rate. You see what happened in between 1971-1979. During the early days of martial law when we had a very strict version of martial law, crime incidence was not substantial, as for instance, in 1975. But crime had slowly gone up when we started normalizing. Of course, this is not to blame normalization. We are all in favor of normalization. About this time (1976) also, we started getting the economic squeeze due to higher costs of energy. Maybe that is a more important factor to consider, because this was not immediately accompanied by a rise in wages or a rise in income for the great majority of our people including those in government and those in the labor groups.

We could get a more meaningful analysis using what we term the “crime rate,” which is the number of crimes divided by unit of population per period of time. We use 100,000 as the unit of population and we use one month as the period of time. Thus, we can compare various periods according to a common yardstick and that is

THE PEACE AND ORDER SITUATION

by General Fidel Ramos

(March 28, 1980)

I consider it a welcome opportunity to be able to present a subject that has been interpreted in many ways and viewed by observers along various aspects. It can be said that the oversensationalized reporting of crimes specially here in Metro Manila has given rise to extreme views regarding the peace and order situation and that it has alarmingly deteriorated. Permit me to say that there should be no cause for alarm, especially on the part of the business community.

Let me tell you also that martial law has been an effective weapon in the crisis situations facing us and has been instrumental in maintaining our stable situation today. Our economic problems, for instance, could have escalated to much graver propor-

Figure 1. A copy of the speech.

Source: Ramos, Fidel. 1980. "The Peace and Order Situation." In *Not By Bread Alone*, ed. Pacifico A. Ortiz, 241-46. Manila: Bishops-Businessmen's Conference.

the average crime rate per month. In 1971 we had an average crime rate of about 20.55 criminal incidents per month for a unit of a 100,000 population which was high enough although this is about 1/3 the crime rate in other countries of the same developmental stage as we are. We experienced very low crime rate figures in 1973-1976, but then they started going up again. Now in 1980 we are again at the level of the 1971. Crime rate (and the trend) is still slightly increasing. We have predicted that this might even increase by about 4% to 8% in 1980. This chart will show what I was just telling you now. In 1971 we had a crime rate of 20.55 incidents per month per 100,000 population. We are now here (1980) at 20.74 or about 1% increase over 1971. Also, we see an increase in what we call the index crimes, which are those major crimes which occur in sufficient frequency and which are capable of being analyzed according to a pattern. These index crimes have also gone up by about 13% in 1979 compared to 1971. Let's take a look at those index crimes. These are the crimes against chastity, persons and property. Theft went up by about 21% in 1979 compared to 1971. Physical injuries have gone up by 118% compared to 1971 and homicide has gone up by about 2%. However, it will be shown that these figures are high because the crime of slight physical injuries has increased very much.

Apparently, people like to quarrel more in 1979. But it is equally true that the crime of serious physical injuries has gone down, which could mean that maybe firearms and other deadly weapons are not being used as much. Maybe people just engaged in fistcuffs [sic]. Robbery went down by about 21% by 1979 and murder down by about 10%. Rape significantly went down by 16%. I do not know if this a sad commentary on the Filipino male.

This chart shows the number of crimes committed with the use of firearms. During the old cowboy days of 1971, some 13% of the total crime volume of 93,000 mentioned earlier for 1971 were committed with the use of firearms. During martial law, the authorities collected some 550,000 illegally possessed or otherwise loose firearms in this country. The beneficial result of this campaign therefore, is reflected in our crime statistics. There is now a much reduced volume of crimes committed with the use of a firearm. Of course, this also means that criminals have, resorted to the use of other weapons such as blunt instruments, explosives, etc. Anyway, all of these show that, in spite of the efforts of the authorities, there is a trend for the increase of the crime rate.

