

No !

Senate President Jovito R. Salonga

THE LAST MOMENT OF TRUTH HAS ARRIVED, AND I think that on this day we are writing a glorious chapter of our history. I recall it was around this time nineteen years ago — to be more precise in 1972 — when Mr. Marcos imposed martial law and declared that for as long as he was in power, Americans need not worry, US military bases would stay in the Philippines.

There was not a whimper of protest from Washington. Filipinos began to wonder — "How about the assurances of American presidents that US bases in the Philippines were for the defense of the Free World and our democratic way of life?" The need to maintain US bases in the Philippines explains why the US supported the corrupt, repressive Marcos dictatorship for almost fourteen years.

Without US acquiescence, Marcos could not have imposed martial law. Without increasing US military and economic support, the Marcos dictatorship would have collapsed after a few years.

Today, we have finally summoned the political will to stand up and end 470 years of foreign military presence here in the Philippines.

To be sure, this decision is not without its cost. There will be temporary dislocations and hardships all around, especially in Central Luzon, but we should learn the lessons we should have learned long ago: namely, no nation can become truly free without sacrifice. The trouble with some of us is we want freedom without sweat and independence without tears. But there is no other way.

Ang sabi ng ating mga kaibigan, "Kayo po naman ay hindi naghihirap. Maawa naman kayo sa amin na mawawalan ng trabaho."

(Our friends say, "You are not suffering. Have pity on us who would lose our jobs.")

Unemployment is a big problem, indeed, and we sympathize. It is because of our sensitivity to this problem that one of us, Senator Saguisag, proposed a three-year phased withdrawal from Subic, so this problem, as well as other problems in Central Luzon, can be attended to during that period of adjustment which will allow for a smooth transition. But as the nation knows, some of our distinguished colleagues and the Palace shot down this pro-poor, pro-people proposal for political reasons.

Apart from the Saguisag proposal, what will operate beginning tomorrow is Article VII, Section 3 of the Manglapus-Schultz Agreement:

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Upon the final termination of the use by the Government of the United States of the Facilities or earlier relinquishment, the United States and the Republic of the Philippines will take appropriate measures as they shall jointly determine to ensure a smooth transition with respect to custody and control of the Facilities and in order to minimize any disruptive effects of such termination.

Thus the way is now open for the smooth transfer of Subic from the American military to Filipino hands, so that with the cooperation and goodwill of the US, Filipinos can, as soon as possible, service and repair foreign vessels, including American vessels, on a commercial basis.

Let me now be a little personal by way of answer to the argument that we have not experienced suffering.

I recall that as a young man of twenty-one, I joined the underground resistance in 1942, was eventually captured, then repeatedly tortured in Pasig in the presence of my father, transferred to Fort Santiago and to three other jails, then sentenced by a Japanese military tribunal to fifteen years of hard labor in Muntinlupa.

When Marcos imposed martial law in 1972, I was among the earliest to oppose it openly and publicly. I handled the cases of well-known as well as obscure political detainees. I was persecuted, arrested, and thrown into the same isolation room where Ninoy had been imprisoned for more than seven years of his memorable life. I recall that in the early years of martial law we were only a few fighting the Marcos dictatorship.

Ang pinuhunan namin ay buhay, hindi empleo lang. Hubad yata sa katwiran at katotohanan ang mga patama ng ating mga kaibigan.

(What we put on line was life, not just employment. It seems that the accusations of our friends are without reason and truth.)

Many friends to whom we owe debts of gratitude or are bound by ties of *pakikisama* (fellowship) have called us or approached us so we would change our vote from No to Yes to this one-sided, unfair treaty. To them, I say:

"Malaki ang aking utang na loob sa inyo, at marahil ako ay makakabayad din balang panahon. Ngunit hindi ko maaaring ipagpalit ang kapakanan

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at ang kalayaan ng ating Inang Bayan. Maaaring kayo ay pro-bases, ngunit tingnan naman ninyo ang kasunduang ito, masyadong api naman ang bansang Pilipino." (My debt of gratitude to you is great, and perhaps I can repay someday. But I could not exchange the welfare and freedom of our motherland. You may be pro-bases, but just look at this treaty, the Filipino nation is too exploited.)

I would like to thank the many students, teachers, and members of non-governmental organizations and cause-oriented groups who have come to this Senate to cheer us up with their parting words — "Stand fast senators, do not lose courage. Our hope is in you. Do not let us down."

I thought we who are against this treaty had only a few supporters. In any case, let me say, "Thank you for giving us your support. But even if you were in the pitiful minority, which does not seem to be the case, questions of right and wrong are not decided by shifting, temporary majorities." In the first referendum as recorded in the New Testament, given a choice between Barrabas and Jesus Christ, the crowd shouted "Crucify him," referring to Jesus, and there is no indication that our Lord got even one vote in that electoral exercise conducted by Pontius Pilate.

But when we are alone, we ask ourselves: Am I right? Could I be wrong?

In the end, we live with our conscience, everyone of us. None of us here in the Senate can escape the judgment of history.

I realize that the nation is divided. We in this Senate are divided. Even the pro-bases senators are apparently divided about their adherence to this one-sided, anachronistic treaty. Senator Shahani, the chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Relations, has given a "critical yes" to this treaty, obviously because of the defects she pointed out in her speech here a few weeks ago. Senator Santanina Rasul wrote her "grave reservations," Senator Alberto Romulo said he was against the treaty before because it was deficient, insensitive, and purposely vague, and Senator Heherson Alvarez delivered a thoughtful privilege

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speech against the treaty for which he will be long remembered.

I think all of us are engaged in a search — a search for the soul of the nation, a quest for the best in the Filipino character, a search for the true Filipino spirit.

We summon the memories of those we honor, from Jose Rizal to Andres Bonifacio, from Jose Abad Santos to Ninoy Aquino.

Their collective message, even on the eve of their death, was one of hope, not of fear; of faith, not of doubt; of confidence in the capacity of the Filipino to suffer and overcome, not of his unwillingness to stand the rigors of freedom and independence.

Those who have spoken before me have examined the treaty, pro and con.

I shall not belabor the arguments of those who, like me, are against the treaty.

I look at the treaty once more — it is entitled "A Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Security." But when we read the text and analyze its implications, it does not strike me as a treaty of friendship, it is a treaty of surrender; it is not a treaty of cooperation, it is a treaty of capitulation; it is not a treaty of security, it is a treaty of greater insecurity. Ships and aircrafts in transit carrying nuclear weapons can come in, without the knowledge or approval of the Philippine government. Sea-based nuclear missiles, it should be noted parenthetically, are more dangerous than land-based weapons. The release of land-based nuclear missiles is severely limited by a chain of command procedure. In contrast, the firing of sea-borne missiles is at the discretion of the commander of each naval vessel. But, really, what is the point of bringing nuclear weapons here when the US is the only remaining superpower in the world?

We are told by Ambassador Pelaez that even if it is only an executive agreement on the US side, the treaty — no matter how one-sided — will be registered with the United Nations Secretariat by the United States. Under Article 102 of the UN

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Charter, the effect of non-registration with the Secretariat is that, even if it is valid between parties, it cannot be invoked before any organ of the United Nations. But registration is of little value to the Philippines, since the side letter of President George Bush – which, unlike the treaty, contains some semblance of obligation on the part of the United States – cannot be registered with the UN. Only treaties and international agreements, not side letters, qualify for registration.

We have been told that if we reject this treaty, no matter how unjust and one-sided it may be, the act of rejection will send a wrong signal to Washington. So, we had better ratify it otherwise we will be punished by Uncle Sam. Once we ratify, even if there are no concrete obligations imposed upon the United States by the treaty, the generosity and altruism of the US government would descend upon our poor nation, as a result of our blind act of servility.

Fortunately, we can draw lessons from the words of wisdom of American policy-makers themselves:

(1) From President Dwight Eisenhower, who once served in the Philippines, and who declared in 1958:

Everything we do in the foreign field has for its basic purpose – our own national security, our own national prosperity...We are not doing these things in the foreign field as a matter of altruism and charity.

(2) From Ambassador Charles Bohlen, one of the ablest US ambassadors who served here in the late '50s. He re- minded his Filipino

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audience:

We in the US Embassy are here (in the Philippines) to protect American interests.
We expect your officials to protect your own interests.

What a stinging rebuke to many Filipinos who are inclined to believe that they also serve our own interests when they first note US interests!

The truth of the matter is that for as long as the bases are here, our relations with the US will not be healthy and normal. If we ask for a higher compensation, they will tell us we are mercenaries and our brand of diplomacy, a cash-register one. *Iyon pala babaratin tayo ng husto!* (It turns out we would be had for a song!)

When we told them before the Mt. Pinatubo eruption that their bases here were the biggest US overseas bases in the world and we should get the compensation we justly deserve, their retort was that we should not view this as a real estate transaction but a mutual security agreement. But after Mt. Pinatubo, the whole thing from their perspective became a real estate transaction!

Why our relations with the US will never be normal while they have their bases here is truthfully explained by former Ambassador Francis Underhill, who used to be political counsellor in Manila from 1968 to 1971, who advocated their closure long ago:

Our relations with the Philippines can never be normal while our bases remain...On the one hand, the bases symbolize their 'special relationship' with us...On the other hand, the bases are also regarded as an affront to Philippine national pride and a symbol of imperfect independence and continuing dependency...In third world circles they yearn to join, the Filipinos are condemned and ostracized because of the bases, and the solatium they (now) seek they see as modest compensation for the obloquy they suffer on our account...The base relationship also helps to perpetuate in the Philippines a neurotic, manipulative, psychically crippling form of dependency. As a consequence, the Philippines is a country that is difficult to take seriously.

Only yesterday, as if to refute claims that some Southeast Asian countries want to host US bases, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas stated that Indonesia opposes foreign bases in Southeast Asia. "We cannot accept the presence of foreign military bases and we do not see the benefits of their presence in other countries. They will only raise international tensions," Alatas said.

Is it not ironic that if we ratify the treaty, we would go back to where we were more than half a century ago? Like this treaty, the Philippine Independence Act of 1934, the Tydings-McDuffie Act, provided for a ten-year transition period after which Philippine independence would be proclaimed and military bases in the Philippines would be gone. We would cease to be a colony of the United States. Our independence was proclaimed on July 4, 1946. *Ngunit ngayon, imbis na pagsulong, tayo ay uurong!* (But now, instead of going forward, we are to slide backward.)

The world has changed since 1947 when we ratified the first Military Bases Agreement. The Soviet Union has agreed to the withdrawal of its forces from former communist satellites in Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union itself is hardly recognizable. Both Yeltsin and Gorbachev have pledged to abolish nuclear weapons. Yet this treaty takes a different tack — it is as if the Cold War is not yet over. China is now a collaborator of the United States. The logic of events should point to a diminution of warlike postures in Southeast Asia, especially in the Philippines.

Long before the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, responsible American officials, aware of the contradictions and strains that warp Philippine-American relations, have recommended the withdrawal of American bases in the Philippines.

George Kennan, the principal architect of American foreign policy after World War II, had advocated in 1948 that the US must, without any sentimentality, control a theoretically independent Philippines in order to contain Soviet expansion. But in 1977, at the height of the Marcos dictatorship, Kennan reversed himself and urged an "immediate, complete, resolute, and wordless" withdrawal of US bases in the Philippines. He said that paying "huge annual bribes as a form of hush money" to keep Filipino leaders quiet and to cause them to "accommodate themselves reluctantly...is not a position in which the US should ever choose to appear."

And after his election as US president, Jimmy Carter declared that human rights would be the centerpiece of American policy. But in a testimony before the US Congress, his own Secretary of State Cyrus Vance candidly admitted that "human rights of Filipinos will have to yield to overriding US security considerations "for as long as the US bases are in the Philippines.

I have stayed long enough in exile in the US to know that ordinary Americans do not even know where Subic is. They will not even understand why we are voting on this one-sided treaty even as they could not understand in 1983 why a corrupt, ruthless dictator, that in their opinion had something to do with the barbaric assassination of Ninoy Aquino, should be aided and supported by their government. I have no doubt that average Americans, known for their generosity of spirit, decency, and sense of fair play would condemn this treaty as unconscionable, if they had the chance to read it. As for the well-informed Americans in universities, churches, and organizations devoted to peace, disarmament, and international understanding, and for many Americans who once served as missionaries and teachers here, I have not yet received any letter or message asking us to ratify this treaty — all have manifested their objection to this unjust agreement. The reason is simple — the acts of the Pentagon and the State Department have not always come up to the basic decency and sense of fairness of the American people.

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One last word.

warned by well-

that my stand on this treaty may hurt my chances of becoming president. No matter. That is an insignificant consequence. In times of great crisis, our martyrs and heroes offered their lives so that our people might become truly free. *Anong kuwenta ng puwesto kung ito ay ihahambing natin sa halaga ng buhay?* (What is the worth of an office if compared to the value of life?) I said it before but I will say it again: "Titles and positions do not mean that much to me anymore. What is more important is to be of real service to our people, with or without any position in the government."

I have been

meaning friends

In our history as a nation, our best years were when we took our destiny in our own hands and faced the uncertain future with boldness and faith. Those were the times when we experienced a sense of national renewal and self-respect. The Revolution of 1896, the battle for liberation of the Philippines in 1942 to 1945, the struggle for freedom during the darkest years of martial law, culminating in the mountain-peak experience of EDSA in February 1986, how can we ever forget these high moments in the life of this nation?

September 16, 1991 may well be the day when we in this Senate found the soul, the true spirit of this nation because we mustered the courage and the will to declare the end of foreign military presence in the Philippines and helped pave the way to lasting peace here and in the world.

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God," our Lord said in His deathless Sermon on the Mount.

Therefore, I vote no to this treaty, and if it were only possible, I would vote 203 million times no. I also vote a resounding yes to the Resolution of Non-concurrence.

Salamat po at mabuhay ang bansang Pilipino!

For your achievements as a nation-builder, having founded and led the Tanganyika African National Union that spearheaded the successful struggle for independence from British rule, and arranged the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania;

For your service as Tanzania's democratically elected president for more than twenty years, a presidency marked by its adherence to the high standards of political accountability and personal integrity, and which gave the highest order of priority to the basic requirements of dignified human existence: food, potable water, shelter, health services, and education;

For the progressiveness, originality, and courage of your vision of social development for Tanzania, mainly, through the *ujamaa*, the Tanzanian road to socialism, a unique attempt of a people to pave its own road to a society that would not only meet their material needs, but more importantly, cultivate and enrich genuine human ways and relations;

For providing inspired leadership in the struggle against apartheid and giving steadfast support to movements in the African continent against colonialism in all its forms;

For your contributions to the cause of Third World solidarity and unity, impressing on poor nations the urgency and wisdom of speaking and acting as one to overcome their isolation and powerlessness;

For being an outstanding Third World leader, and serving as chairman of the South Commission, thus, breathing life into the concept of a new international order based on genuinely equitable relations between industrialized and developing countries;

And finally, for serving as a *mwaliimu*, or teacher, not only to your own people but also to others, teaching them the transformative power of new ideas...

So goes the citation of the Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, conferred on South Commission chairman Julius K. Nyerere by the University of the Philippines last July 12, 1991. He came to the country via Beijing, China, where he presided the launching of the Chinese translation of the book, *The Challenge to the South; The Report of the South Commission*.

"The Imperatives of People-Centered Development" is his acceptance speech and "The Challenge from the Mwalimu: The South Must Act Together" is the transcript of the animated open forum he had with members of the UP academe afterwards.