R.H.R. NO. 1
Monday, July 22, 1991

OPENING OF SESSION

At 10:00 a.m., the Speaker, the Hon. Ramon V. Mitra, called the House to order.

THE SPEAKER. In accordance with Section 15, Article VI of the Constitution, the Fifth Regular Session of the House of Representatives is called to order.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE SPEAKER. Everybody will please rise to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

THE SPEAKER. Everybody will please remain standing for the Invocation to be delivered by the Speaker Pro Tempore, the Hon. Antonio Cuenco.

INVOCATION

THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE. To You, the Almighty, Lord of the past and of the future, Who watches over us today, God of both the humblest creatures and the mightiest nations, Supreme Ruler of the universe and true guide and mover of our history, we bow in prayer and petition that this, our last annual session which we open today, will prove equal to both the fondest hopes and sharpest perils of our time.

Help us face the magnitude of our dangers just as You helped us overcome them in the past. We send You a plea for divine protection by Your mighty hand. In total supplication to Your greatness and benevolence, we echo the voice of Your minstrel David, who proclaimed Your magnificence in the days of old in these tones:

> If the Lord does not build the house,
> In vain do its builders labor.
> If the Lord does not watch over the city,
> In vain does the watchman keep vigil.

And so, in spite of our cataclysms, our faith in You has not weakened or withered. It has remained strong. It has not faltered with our natural holocausts. It has grown stronger in trial and tribulation just as steel and iron are hardened on the fiery furnace and molded on the blacksmith's anvil.

For as Your ancient people Israel suffered their own afflictions, so must we bear today our own travails in undiminished faith in Your abiding mercy. For us to doubt or distrust Your Providence is a great offense to You, since even among us human beings we are offended by those who distrust us. You did not abandon Israel, and we know that You will not abandon us. And then shall our prayer be transformed from remonstrance and petition to thanksgiving and praise, reciting what Your prophet said on their day of deliverance:

> Let us praise God's name with dancing
> And make music with timbrel and harp,
> For the Lord takes delight in his people
> And crowns them with salvation.

But our salvation, Lord, will not be quick or easy, nor will it come without the collective toil and strivings of this House working overtime as the representatives of our troubled but unvanquished nation. We know You will strengthen the sinews of our determination and valor so we can play our part in our own deliverance. You will prepare our hands for struggle, and clear our minds of confusion and fear. You will vitiate our hardships with Your graces, and wipe away our tears with Your blessings. And the falling debris of our misfortunes will be mitigated by the upswing of our common prayers.

Allow us then, O Lord, to proceed with our deliberations today, conscious of our obligations to You, to our people, to our history, and to our own conscience.

Amen.

ROLL CALL

THE SPEAKER. The Secretary General will please call the roll by provinces.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL, *reading:*

ABRA
First District
Rudolfo A. Bernardez ..... Present *
AGUSAN DEL NORTE (with the City of Butuan)
First District
Charito B. Plaza ..... Present *
Second District
Edelmiro A. Amante ..... Present *

*Appeared after the roll call

AGUSAN DEL SUR
First District
Democrito O. Plaza ..... Absent
AKLAN
Ramon B. Legaspi ..... Present
ALBAY (with Legaspi City)
First District
Edcel C. Lagman ..... Present
Second District
Carlos R. Imperial .....
ANTIQUE
First District
Exequiel B. Javier ..... Present
AURORA
Benedicto G. Miran ..... Present *
BACOLOD CITY
First District
Romeo G. Guanzon ..... Present *
BASILAN
Alvin G. Dans ..... Present
BATAAN
First District
Felicito C. Payumo ..... Present
Second District
Enrique T. Garcia ..... Present *
BATANGAS (with the Cities of Batangas and Lipa)
First District
Conrado V. Apacible ..... Present *
Second District
Hernando B. Perez ..... Present *
Third District
Lally Laurel-Trinidad ..... Present
Fourth District
Jose E. Calingasan ..... Present
BENGUET (with Baguio City)
First District
Honorato Y. Aquino ..... Present
Second District
Samuel M. Dangwa .....
BOHOL (with Tagbilaran City)
First District
Venice Borja-Agana ..... Present *
Second District
David B. Tirol ..... Present *
Third District
Isidro C. Zarraga ..... Present
BUKIDNON
First District
Socorro O. Acosta ..... Present
Second District
Violeta T. Labaria ..... Present
Third District
Jose Ma. R. Zubiri, Jr. ..... Present
BULACAN
First District
Francisco B. Aniag, Jr. ..... Present
Second District
Vicente C. Rivera, Jr. ..... Present
Third District
Jose L. Cabochan ..... Present
CAGAYAN
First District
Domingo A. Tuzon ..... Present *
Second District
Leoncio M. Puzon ..... Present
CAGAYAN DE ORO
Benedicta B. Roa ..... Present *
CALOOCAN CITY
First District
Romeo L. Santos ..... Present
Second District
Gerardo P. Cabochan ..... Present
CAMARINES NORTE
Renato M. Unico ..... Present
CAMARINES SUR (with the Cities of Naga and Iriga)
First District
Rolando R. Andaya ..... Present *
Second District
Raul S. Roco ..... Present
Third District
Eduardo P. Pilapil ..... Absent
Fourth District
Ciriaco R. Alfelor ..... Present *
CAMIGUIN
Pedro P. Romualdo ..... Present
CAPIZ (with Roxas City)
First District
Gerardo A. Roxas, Jr. ..... Present *
Second District
Cornelio T. Villareal, Sr. .....
CAVITE (with the Cities of Tagaytay, Cavite and Trece Martires)
First District
Leonardo L. Guerrero ..... Present
Second District
Renato P. Dragon ..... Present *
Third District
Jorge A. Nuñez ..... Present *
CEBU (with the Cities of Danao, Lapu-Lapu, Mandaue and Toledo)
First District
Antonio T. Bacaltos ..... Present *
Second District
Crisologo A. Abines ..... Absent
Third District
Pablo P. Garcia ..... Present
Fourth District
Celestino E. Martinez, Jr. ..... Present *
Fifth District
Ramon D. Durano III ..... Present *
Sixth District
Vicente L. dela Serna ..... Absent
CEBU CITY
First District
Raul V. del Mar ..... Present

* Appeared after the roll call

Second District
Antonio V. Cuenco ..... Present
DAVAO CITY
First District
Prospero C. Nograles ..... Present *
Second District
Cornelio P. Maskariño ..... Present
DAVAO DEL NORTE
First District
Lorenzo S. Sarmiento, Sr. ..... Present *
Second District
Baltazar A. Sator ..... Present
Third District
Rodolfo P. del Rosario ..... Present
DAVAO DEL SUR
First District
Juanito G. Camasura, Jr. ..... Absent
Second District
Benjamin V. Bautista, Sr. .....
DAVAO ORIENTAL
First District
Enrico G. Dayanghirang ..... Present
Second District
Thelma Z. Almario ..... Present
EASTERN SAMAR
Jose T. Ramirez ..... Present
IFUGAO
Gualberto B. Lumauig ..... Present
ILOCOS NORTE
First District
Roque R. Ablan, Jr. ..... Present *
Second District
Mariano R. Nalupta, Jr. ..... Present*
ILOCOS SUR
First District
Luis C. Singson ..... Present *
Second District
Eric D. Singson ..... Absent
ILOILO
First District
Oscar G. Garin ..... Present *
Second District
Alberto J. Lopez ..... Present *
Third District
Licurgo P. Tirador ..... Present *
Fourth District
Narciso D. Monfort ..... Present *
Fifth District
Niel D. Tupas ..... Present *
ILOILO CITY
Rafael J. Lopez-Vito ..... Present *
ISABELA
First District
Rodolfo B. Albano ..... Present
Second District
Simplicio B. Domingo, Jr. ..... Present *
Third District
Santiago P. Respicio ..... Present
Fourth District
Antonio M. Abaya ..... Present
KALINGA-APAYAO
William F. Claver ..... Present
LAGUNA (with San Pablo City)
First District
Nereo R. Joaquin ..... Present
Second District
Joaquin M. Chipeco, Jr. ..... Present *
Third District
Florante L. Aquino ..... Present *
Fourth District
Magdaleno M. Palacol ..... Present
LANAO DEL NORTE (with Iligan City)
First District
Mariano Ll. Badelles, Sr. ..... Present
Second District
Abdullah D. Dimaporo .....
LANAO DEL SUR
LAS PIÑAS and MUNTINLUPA
Filemon C. Aguilar ..... Absent
LA UNION
First District
Victor F. Ortega ..... Present
Second District
Jose D. Aspiras ..... Present
LEYTE (with the Cities of Tacloban and Ormoc)
First District
Cirilo Roy G. Montejo ..... Present
Second District
Manuel L. Horca, Jr. ..... Present*
Third District
Alberto S. Veloso ..... Present
Fourth District
Carmelo J. Locsin ..... Present
Fifth District
Eriberto V. Loreto ..... Present
MAGUINDANAO (with Cotabato City)
First District
Michael O. Mastura ..... Present
Second District
Guimid P. Matalam ..... Present*
MAKATI
Ma. Consuelo Puyat-Reyes ..... Present
MALABON and NAVOTAS
Teresa Aquino-Oreta ..... Present*
MANILA
First District
Martin B. Isidro ..... Present
Second District
Jaime C. Lopez ..... Present*
Third District
Leonardo B. Fugoso ..... Present
Fourth District
Ramon S. Bagatsing, Jr. ..... Present*
Fifth District
Amado S. Bagatsing ..... Present*
Sixth District
Pablo V. Ocampo ..... Present

* Appeared after the roll call

MARIKINA
Democlito J. Angeles ..... Present*
MARINDUQUE
Carmencita O. Reyes .....
MASBATE
First District
Tito R. Espinosa ..... Present*
Second District
Luz Cleta R. Bakunawa ..... Present
MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL (with the Cities of Oroquieta, Ozamiz and Tangub)
First District
Julio H. Ozamiz ..... Present
Second District
Hilarion J. Ramiro, Jr. ..... Present*
MISAMIS ORIENTAL (with Gingoog City)
First District
Isacio A. Pelaez ..... Present
Second District
Victorico L. Chaves ..... Present
MOUNTAIN PROVINCE
Victor S. Dominguez ..... Present*
NEGROS OCCIDENTAL (with the Cities of San Carlos, Cadiz, Bago, La Carlota and Silay)
First District
Salvador S. Laguda .....
Second District
Manuel H. Puey ..... Present*
Third District
Jose Carlos V. Lacson ..... Present
Fourth District
Edward M. Matti ..... Present
Fifth District
Mariano M. Yulo ..... Present*
Sixth District
Hortensia L. Starke ..... Present
NEGROS ORIENTAL (with the Cities of Bais, Canlaon and Dumaguete)
First District
Jerome V. Paras ..... Present*
Second District
Miguel L. Romero ..... Present
Third District
Margarito B. Teves ..... Present*
NORTH COTABATO
First District
Rodrigo B. Gutang ..... Present
Second District
Gregorio A. Andolana ..... Present
NORTHERN SAMAR
First District
Raul A. Daza ..... Present
Second District
Jose L. Ong, Jr. ..... Present
NUEVA ECIJA (with the Cities of Cabanatuan, Palayan and San Jose)
First District
Eduardo Nonato N. Joson, Jr. ..... Present
Second District
Simeon E. Garcia, Jr. ..... Present*
Third District
Hermogenes D. Concepcion, Jr. ..... Present*
NUEVA VIZCAYA
Carlos M. Padilla ..... Present
OCCIDENTAL MINDORO
Mario Gene J. Mendiola ..... Present*
ORIENTAL MINDORO
First District
Rodolfo G. Valencia ..... Present*
Second District
Jesus M. Punzalan .....
PALAWAN
First District
David A. Ponce de Leon ..... Present
Second District
Ramon V. Mitra ..... Present
PAMPANGA (with Angeles City)
First District
Carmelo F. Lazatin ..... Present*
Second District
Emigdio L. Lingad ..... Present
Third District
Oscar S. Rodriguez ..... Present
Fourth District
Marciano M. Pineda ..... Present
PANGASINAN (with the Cities of Dagupan and San Carlos)
First District
Second District
Antonio E. Bengson III ..... Present*
Third District
Fabian S. Sison ..... Present
Fourth District
Jose C. de Venecia, Jr. ..... Present*
Fifth District
Conrado B. Estrella, Jr. ..... Absent
Sixth District
Conrado M. Estrella III ..... Absent
PARAÑAQUE
Freddie N. Webb ..... Present*
PASAY CITY
Lorna L. Verano-Yap ..... Present*
PASIG
Rufino S. Javier ..... Present
PATEROS and TAGUIG
Dante O. Tinga ..... Present
QUEZON (with Lucena City)
First District
Wilfrido L. Enverga ..... Present*
Second District
Third District
Bienvenido O. Marquez, Jr. ..... Present*
Fourth District
Oscar F. Santos ..... Present
QUEZON CITY
First District
Renato A. Yap ..... Present*

* Appeared after the roll call

Second District
Antonio L. Aquino ..... Present
Third District
Anna Dominique M.L. Coseteng ..... Present
Fourth District
Ismael A. Mathay, Jr. .....
QUIRINO
Junie E. Cua ..... Present*
RIZAL
First District
Francisco S. Sumulong, Sr. ..... Present
Second District
Emigdio S. Tanjuatco, Jr. ..... Present*
ROMBLON
Natalio M. Beltran, Jr. ..... Present*
SAMAR (with Calbayog City)
First District
Jose A. Roño .....
Second District
Venancio T. Garduce ..... Present
SAN JUAN and MANDALUYONG
Ronaldo B. Zamora ..... Present
SIQUIJOR
Orlando B. Fua ..... Present*
SORSOGON
First District
Salvador H. Escudero III ..... Present
Second District
Bonifacio H. Gillego ..... Present*
SOUTH COTABATO (with General Santos City)
First District
Adelbert W. Antonino ..... Present
Second District
Hilario L. de Pedro III ..... Present*
Third District
James L. Chiongbian ..... Present
SOUTHERN LEYTE
Roger G. Mercado ..... Present
SULTAN KUDARAT
Estanislao V. Valdez ..... Present
SULU
First District
Abdusakur M. Tan ..... Absent
Second District
Arden S. Anni ..... Present
SURIGAO DEL NORTE (with Surigao City)
First District
Glenda B. Ecleo ..... Present*
Second District
Constantino C. Navarro, Sr. ..... Present
SURIGAO DEL SUR
First District
Mario S. Ty ..... Present
Second District
Ernesto T. Estrella ..... Present*
TARLAC
First District
Jose S. Cojuangco, Jr. ..... Present*
Second District
Jose V. Yap ..... Present*
Third District
Herminio S. Aquino ..... Present
TAWI-TAWI
Romulo M. Espaldon ..... Present*
VALENZUELA
Antonio M. Serapio ..... Present
ZAMBALES (with Olongapo City)
First District
Katherine H. Gordon .....
Second District
Pacita T. Gonzalez ..... Present
ZAMBOANGA CITY
Maria Clara L. Lobregat ..... Present
ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE (with the Cities of Dapitan and Dipolog)
First District
Artemio A. Adasa, Jr. ..... Present*
Second District
Ernesto S. Amatong ..... Present
Third District
Angel M. Carloto ..... Present
ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR (with Pagadian City)
First District
Isidoro E. Real, Jr. ..... Present
Second District
Antonio H. Cerilles ..... Absent
Third District
Wilfredo G. Cainglet ..... Present
SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES
DISABLED SECTOR
Arturo A. Borjal ..... Present
FISHERFOLK SECTOR
Arturo C. Olegario, Sr. ..... Present
LABOR SECTOR
Ramon J. Jabar ..... Present
Adelisa A. Raymundo ..... Present*
Alejandro C. Villaviza ..... Present
PEASANT SECTOR
Romeo S. Angeles ..... Present*
Bartolome D. Arteche ..... Present*
Daniel Q. de Luna ..... Present*
URBAN POOR SECTOR
Rey Magno Teves ..... Present
URBAN POOR AND HANDICAPPED SECTOR
Hernani B. Panganiban .....
YOUTH SECTOR
Jose Luis C. Gascon ..... Present
Al Ignatius G. Lopez ..... Present
VETERANS AND ELDERLY SECTOR
Dionisio S. Ojeda ..... Present*

The House is in receipt of official advice of absence of the following Members: Honorable Bautista, Dangwa, Dimaporo, Imperial, Punzalan, Roño and Villareal.

Honorable Gordon, Laguda, Mathay, Panganiban and Reyes are on official mission.

* Appeared after the roll call

The Speaker is present.

The roll call shows 101 Members responded to the call.

THE SPEAKER. The Chair declares the presence of a quorum.

REMARKS OF SPEAKER RAMON V. MITRA

THE SPEAKER. Before we proceed to the Business for the Day, I would like to seek leave of my colleagues in the Chamber to make a statement.

This is our last session before this Congress passes into history. We have but little time left to ensure that posterity's judgment of this House is as we would want it to be.

Already, we can claim to have set out some landmark legislations for future Congresses to follow – laws that turn public policy towards new directions.

We have largely finished the work of fleshing out the Constitution of 1987 – of spelling out its broad mandates with specific applications.

Our Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) is one of the few such laws ever written by a freely elected Congress in a democratic State.

Our law separating the peace-keeping and security functions of our military should work to safeguard our still fragile representative institutions while enhancing our civic order.

And we are winding up the job of decentralizing public administration through the Local Government Code. Devolution of real authority to local government units will redress the disparity in power between the central government in Manila and administrations in our provinces, cities and towns.

In economic policy, we have moved our country from a regime of protectionism to an outward orientation – from import substitution to stronger linkages with the world community. In charting new and different directions for the national economy, we accept that hospitality to foreign investments will generate more jobs and create market efficiencies. We must complete as much as we can the nine-point package that rounds off the Foreign Investments Act before we serve out our tenure.

Priorities of the last session are noteworthy. Relief and rehabilitation of the region devastated by Mount Pinatubo have the most urgent claims on our attention. As you know, the House leadership was active in this work even during the recess. Our idea is to try and transform the catastrophe into an opportunity to modernize Central Luzon's agriculture – to turn the farmers of the affected provinces to high-value crops and higher cropping intensities.

This House should also concern itself with the future of the Aeta communities of Zambales. These most pitiful of Mount Pinatubo's victims have lost not only their ancestral homes but their whole way of life.

I also commend to this House the Filipino base workers whom the base-treaty negotiators seem to have completely forgotten in their discussions relative to the American withdrawal from Clark Air Base in Angeles City.

The other priorities of this last session should certainly include liberalization of the banking system.

We need to correct our still regressive tax system. We also need to compel businessmen, self-employed professionals, and corporations to take up their rightful share of the tax burden.

We will not write new tax laws this session. But we should certainly strengthen the capabilities of our revenue agencies – the BIR and the Customs – to do their jobs. We must lay down heavier penalties for tax evasion, as well as the mechanisms for coordination and information sharing among the revenue agencies and business-economic institutions like the Central Bank.

We need to do a great deal more to reduce bureaucratic procedures that restrict the conduct of business. We must also deregulate key industries to ensure greater competition and production efficiency. In this connection, we shall be consulting with the private sector on ways to broaden the scope of deregulation of the economy.

And we should certainly take up basic reforms in national education, whose all too visible decline in quality gravely concerns every Filipino family. The Committee on Education, which we created to look into what Congress can do to arrest this deterioration, should finish its inquiries before October.

We shall have barely six months to act on EDCOM's recommendations which, I heard from Caloy Padilla, will be controversial. But the issue of education reform is really so urgent and so vital to our country's future development that I do not think we can in conscience pass the buck to the next Congress. We have to complete it this session.

This Congress has accomplished many practical things. But because of its historical context, its most important role is really a symbolic one: To show that representative institutions are necessary for a new nation struggling against poverty, ignorance and disease.

Truth is, in our country, despite our recent experience with a strongman regime, the authoritarian rule continues to be an attractive alternative, even for those individuals who should know better. The reason is that Filipinos often still associate representative institutions with political irresponsibility, with what Sukarno of Indonesia used to call "free fight liberalism."

It is true that to a poor and impatient people, a democracy which cannot rise above the mean and self-interested struggle for peace and power cannot always be preferable to a dictatorship which makes the train run on time.

I agree that we do not always use our freedom well, because people do need some training in the use of freedom as they do in nearly everything else. Yet, we do not have time enough to undergo the slow training by history that the Western democracies had – an accretion of civility, the habit of consensus and give-and-take through 150 years.

All the same, I think it is a mistaken and a dangerous thought we should resist – to say that civil liberties and representative institutions are a luxury in a poor country; that people would rather have food on their tables than theoretical rights which they cannot anyway exercise.

Freedom and development as we have experienced always go together. Neither can thrive separated from the other, if only because an authoritarian regime that begins by taking away our civil rights will ultimately end up depriving us of our pots and pans also.

Now to the task ahead. *(Applause)*

MR. SUMULONG. Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER. The Majority Floor Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.RES. NO. 2314
(Quorum in the House)

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP

MR. SUMULONG. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Resolution No. 2314.

THE SPEAKER. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Consideration of House Resolution No. 2314 is now in order. With the permission of the body, the Secretary General will read the title and text of the resolution.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Resolution No. 2314, entitled: RESOLUTION INFORMING THE SENATE THAT A QUORUM BEING PRESENT, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS ENTERED UPON THE EXERCISE OF ITS FUNCTIONS.

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That a message be sent to the Senate informing said Body that a quorum being present, the House of Representatives has entered upon the exercise of its functions.

ADOPTION OF H.RES. NO. 2314
(Quorum in the House)

MR. SUMULONG. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt House Resolution No. 2314.

THE SPEAKER. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

House Resolution No. 2314 is adopted.

The Chair would like to inform the House that the Senate President and I have conferred on the telephone and we decided to accept the benefits of modern technology to transmit these communications by way of fax machine. So, the Senate is awaiting the transmission of this message.

The Majority Floor Leader is recognized.

CONSIDERATION OF H.CT.RES. NO. 51
(House and Senate joint session)

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP

MR. SUMULONG. Mr. Speaker, I move that we consider House Concurrent Resolution No. 51.

THE SPEAKER. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Consideration of House Concurrent Resolution No. 51 is in order. With the permission of the body, the Secretary General will read the title and text of the resolution.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. House Concurrent Resolution No. 51, entitled: CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO HOLD A JOINT SESSION TO HEAR THE MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES.

Resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring, That both Houses of the Congress of the Philippines hold a joint session on July Twenty-two, Nineteen hundred and ninety-one, at four o'clock in the afternoon in the session Hall of the House of Representatives, to hear the message of the President of the Philippines.

ADOPTION OF H.CT.RES. NO. 51
(House and Senate joint session)

MR. SUMULONG. Mr. Speaker, I move for the adoption of House Concurrent Resolution No. 51.

THE SPEAKER. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 51 is adopted.

MR. SUMULONG. Mr. Speaker, I now move that we ask the Secretary General to read the Messages from the Senate.

THE SPEAKER. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The Secretary General will read the Messages from the Senate.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL, *reading:*

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Letter from Mr. Edwin P. Acoba, Secretary General of the Senate, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on July 22, 1991, adopted as Senate Resolution No. 138, entitled:

"RESOLUTION INFORMING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT A QUORUM BEING PRESENT THE SENATE HAS ENTERED UPON THE EXERCISE OF ITS FUNCTIONS."

TO THE ARCHIVES

Letter from Mr. Edwin P. Acoba, Secretary of the Senate, informing the House of Representatives that the Senate on July 22, 1991, concurred in House Concurrent Resolution No. 51, entitled:

"CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO HOLD A JOINT SESSION TO HEAR THE MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES."

TO THE ARCHIVES

Letter from Mr. Edwin P. Acoba, Secretary of the Senate, transmit-

ting Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 50, entitled:

"CONCURRENT RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF A JOINT COMMITTEE OF BOTH HOUSES TO NOTIFY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES THAT THE CONGRESS NOW CONVENED IN REGULAR SESSION IS READY TO RECEIVE HER MESSAGE IN A JOINT SESSION CALLED FOR THE PURPOSE."

TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

CONSIDERATION OF S.CT. RES. NO. 50
(House and Senate joint committee
for Fifth Regular Session)

PERIOD OF SPONSORSHIP

MR. SUMULONG. Mr. Speaker, I move that we now consider Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 50.

THE SPEAKER. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Consideration of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 50 is now in order. With the permission of the body, the Secretary General will read the title and text of the resolution.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL. Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 50, entitled: CONCURRENT RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF A JOINT COMMITTEE OF BOTH HOUSES TO NOTIFY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES THAT THE CONGRESS NOW CONVENED IN REGULAR SESSION IS READY TO RECEIVE HER MESSAGE IN A JOINT SESSION CALLED FOR THE PURPOSE.

Resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring, to authorize, as it hereby authorizes, the appointment of a Joint Committee of both Houses of Congress to be composed of six Members, three to be appointed by the President of the Senate, and the three by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to notify the President of the Philippines that the Congress, now convened in regular session, is ready to receive her message to the Congress for its Fifth Regular Session in a Joint Session called for the purpose.

ADOPTION OF S.CT.RES. NO. 50
(House and Senate joint committee
for Fifth Regular Session)

MR. SUMULONG. Mr. Speaker, I move that we adopt Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 50.

THE SPEAKER. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 50 is adopted.

MR. SUMULONG. Mr. Speaker, in pursuance of the Senate concurrent resolution we just adopted, I propose the appointment of the following Members of the House to the joint committee to notify the President of the joint session at four o'clock in the afternoon today, namely: Hon. Gerardo P. Cabochan; Hon. Luz Cleta Bakunawa; Hon. Hortensia L. Starke; Hon. Maria Clara Lobregat; Hon. Thelma Almario, for the majority; and Hon. Rodolfo Albano and Hon. Antonio Serapio for the minority.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER. Is there any objection? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

MR. SUMULONG. Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend the session for a few minutes.

THE SPEAKER. The session is suspended.

It was 10:34 a.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 10:42 a.m., the session was resumed.

THE SPEAKER. The session is resumed.

MR. SUMULONG. Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER. The Majority Floor Leader is recognized.

MR. SUMULONG. We have just received a report from the joint committee that the president had been notified that the House is ready to receive her State-of-the-Nation Address at four o'clock this afternoon. For this occasion, Mr. Speaker, we wish to remind all the Members of this Chamber to be here an hour before the joint session at four o'clock.

So, Mr. Speaker, to give way to the joint session at four o'clock in the afternoon today, I move that we adjourn our session this morning until four o'clock this afternoon.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

THE SPEAKER. Has the Majority Floor Leader reminded the Members that they should be in Barong Filipino this afternoon?

Is there any objection to the earlier motion to adjourn the session? *(Silence)* The Chair hears none; the motion is approved.

The session is adjourned until four o'clock this afternoon.

It was 10:43 a.m.

Monday, July 22, 1991

PROCESSIONAL

At 4:04 p.m., the processional took place with the entry of the President, Her Excellency Corazon C. Aquino, to the Plenary Hall of the House of Representatives.

CALL TO ORDER

At 4:05 p.m., the Senate President, the Honorable Jovito R. Salonga on behalf of the Senate, and the Speaker, the Honorable Ramon V. Mitra, on behalf of the House, called the session to order.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM
AND THE NATION'S PRAYER

Thereupon, the Tiples de Santo Domingo Choir sang the National Anthem which was followed by the Nation's Prayer led by Minister Adriel O. Meimban of the Iglesia ni Cristo Church, Reverend Admirador Fideris of the Philippine Independent Church, Msgr. Francisco Tantoco, and Bishop Gabriel Reyes.*

Thereafter, the Chair recognized the President, Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino for her State of the Nation Address. *

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

Immediately after the President terminated her speech, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives declared the Joint Session adjourned.

It was 4:55 p.m.

*See R.H.R. No.1

OPENING OF THE FIFTH JOINT REGULAR SESSION

At 4:04 p.m., the processional took place with the entry of the President, Her Excellency Corazon C. Aquino, to the Plenary Hall.

The Speaker, the Hon. Ramon V. Mitra, and the Senate President, the Hon. Jovito R. Salonga, opened the joint session.

THE SPEAKER. On the part of the House, the Fifth Joint Regular Session is called to order.

THE SENATE PRESIDENT. Sa panig ng Senado, binubuksan ang pinagsamang pulong ng Kongreso.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE SPEAKER. Everybody will please rise to sing the Philippine National Anthem.

Everybody rose to sing the Philippine National Anthem which was led by the Tiples de Santo Domingo Choir.

THE SPEAKER. Everybody will please remain standing for the ecumenical reading of the Nation's Prayer.

Everybody remained standing for the Nation's Prayer, led by Minister Adriel O. Meimban, Bishop Admirador Fideris, Monsignor Francisco Tantoco, and Bishop Gabriel Reyes.

PANALANGIN NG BAYAN

MIN. MEIMBAN. Mangyari po sanang ipakiyuko ang ating mga ulo at manalangin po tayo.

Ama naming Diyos
Na isang tunay at makapangyarihan sa lahat,
Ang kapulungan pong ito ng mga Mambabatas
Sa pangunguna ng aming Pangulo
Ay buong galang na muling dumudulog sa Iyo.
Buong kapakumbabaan pong humihiling kami
Ng Iyong napakahalagang basbas.

Pakibiyayaan Mo po ang nalalabing panahon
Ng panunungkulan ng aming mga pinunong bayan.
Nawa'y lubusang magkaisa at magtulungan kami
Upang pangalagaan hindi lang po ang aming bagong demokrasya
Kung hindi sa ikagagaan naman ng matinding kalagayan
Ng aming hirap na hirap na bayan.

Patnubayan Mo po ang sambayanang Pilipino
Na namimighati at nahihirapan;
Dulutan Mo po ng Iyong walang hanggang awa
Ang bayang ito na patuloy na hinahagupit
Ng sunud-sunod na unos.

Bigyan Mo po kami ng sapat na linaw ng isip,
Lakas ng katawan, tibay ng loob
At pananampalataya upang batahin namin
Ang darating pang mga matitinding pagsubok.

BISHOP FIDERIS. Nawa'y ang lahat ng ito ay magsilbing paalaala
Sa aming nakalilimot sa Iyo,
O Panginoong Diyos.
Gisingin po Ninyo kami, lalung-lalo na
Ang aming mahihinang damdamin
Upang muli kaming magbalik-loob sa Inyo.
Ipagkaloob po Ninyo sa amin
Ang Inyong pagkalinga
Upang sa ganoon ay muli naming maibangon
Ang aming bayang nasasadlak sa kahirapan.

Kanlungin Mo po ang mga nauna sa amin
Na kasama namin na ngayon ay
Nasa kabilang buhay na.
Nawa'y matahimik ang kanilang mga kaluluwa
Habang kaming naririto ngayon
Ay ipagpatuloy ang mga gawaing
Kanilang iniwan sa bawa't isa sa amin.

MONSIGNOR TANTOCO. Gabayan Ninyo ang aming mga halal na pinuno at
Gayon din ang mga nanunungkulan
Sa sektor publiko.
Pag-ibayuhin Ninyo ang aming sigla,
Patatagin Ninyo ang aming pananagutan sa bayan
Tungo sa isang bayan na masagana, mapayapa
At may tunay na pagkakaisa.

BISHOPREYES. Handog namin sa Inyo, Ama naming mahal,
Ang lahat ng aming mga pagsisikap at tagumpay.
Sapagkat sa Inyo ang kaharian,
Ang kapangyarihan at kaluwalhatian,
Ngayon at magpakailanman.
Amen.

THE SPEAKER. Ladies and Gentlemen, Her Excellency, Corazon Cojuangco Aquino, the President of the Republic of the Philippines. *(Applause)*

STATE-OF-THE-NATION ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT AQUINO

THE PRESIDENT. Senate President Jovito Salonga, Speaker Ramon Mitra, Chief Justice Marcelo Fernan, Hon. Diosdado Macapagal, distinguished Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Your Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps, fellow workers in the government, honored guests, minamahal kong mga kababayan:

In March 1973, six months after the declaration of martial law, Ninoy Aquino was taken blindfolded from Fort Bonifacio and brought to a place he did not know. He was stripped naked and thrown into a cell. His only human contact was a jailer. The immediate prospect in such a place was a midnight execution in front of a grave dug by himself.

The purpose was clear as it was diabolical. It was not to kill him yet, but to break him first. And with him break the compelling proof that men can stand up to a dictatorship.

He came close to giving up, he told me; he slipped in and out of despair. But a power that must have been God held him together. He remembered the words of the Epistle, "God chose the weak to confound the strong."

On the third anniversary of his incarceration in Laur, the recollection of his pain gave birth to a poem of hope. This is the poem he wrote:

I am burning the candle of my
life in the dark
with no one to benefit
from the light.

The candle slowly melts away;
soon its wick will be burned out
and the light is gone.

If someone will only gather
the melted wax, reshape it,
give it a new wick,
for another fleeting moment
my candle can once again
light the dark,
be of service
one more time,
and then . . . goodbye.

This is the anguish of good men: that the good they do will come to nothing; that pains suffered in obscurity or sacrifices made away from the sight of men amount to the same, and mock the man or woman who bears them.

Mr. Senate President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Congress, distinguished guests, my countrymen: that is not true. None of the good that we do is ever lost; not even the light in an empty room is wasted.

From Ninoy's burnt-out candle and thousands like it in cells throughout the garrison state, we gathered the melted wax and made more candles to burn not as long in such loneliness, but much more brightly all together, as to banish the darkness and light us to a new day.

You might ask: When will the President stop invoking Ninoy's name? My answer is: When a President stands here other than by Ninoy's grace, and not while gratitude is nourished by memory. Not while we acknowledge that it was his sacrifice that gave us back our freedom and restored the freely elected office whose incumbent must stand every year in this place.

Five years have passed. My term is ending. And so is yours. As we came, so we should go – with grateful acknowledgment to the men who made it possible for us to be here; a man who discovered hope in the starkest despair, and has something yet to teach a country facing adversity again.

It would be foolish to ignore what is staring us in the face.

Our march of progress brought us far, but such misfortunes have come upon us to make us feel that we are not much farther from where we started.

The eruption of Mount Pinatubo is the biggest in this century. Abroad, its effect is so far-reaching as to lower the temperature of the earth. At home, it is so devastating it knocked off 80,000 productive hectares from our agriculture and destroyed the commerce of at least three provinces. Hundreds of thousands were driven from their homes and livelihoods, and thrown on the kindness of relatives and countrymen and on the solicitude of the State. It was an event so powerful, it wiped out the largest military base in the Pacific and changed the nature of our relationship with an old ally. In the wake of the volcanic eruption, more has been revealed about that relationship than was covered by its ash.

Before Pinatubo, there was the typhoon that cut a wide swathe of destruction across the southern regions. And before that was the killer quake that cut off the northern parts of the country, destroying billions of pesos in infrastructure, causing the loss of billions more in foregone economic activities. It leveled the City of Pines and buried children in the rubble of yet another city.

But those natural calamities were preceded by another; entirely the work of human hands: the massive December 1989 military revolt that cut short a second economic recovery, after the dislocation caused by the earlier August 1987 coup attempt. That one strangled the powerful rebound of the Philippine economy after the EDSA Revolution.

I mention these calamities not to excuse the perceived shortcomings of my administration nor to brag about my indestructibility. I mention them so that we know where we are, and why we are here, and the exact requirements of the task to build up this country yet again.

I mention them because I will compare them with what we had and lost, and then I will ask: Was it all in vain? And I will answer: It was not; no more than a hero's life is wasted.

By 1985, the economy had contracted considerably – its rate of growth had been negative for two consecutive years. The country was at a standstill, as if waiting only for the last rites to be performed. By 1986, we had turned the economy around in less than a year. We improved on that performance the year after.

The rate of unemployment was reduced, the volume of new

investments significantly increased. New industrial projects were introduced, hitherto idle industrial capacity was fully utilized. The foundation of new regional industrial zones was laid. Public infrastructure and services strained under the load of expanding economic activity.

I mention this not to offset the shortcomings of the present with the achievements of the past. I mention it to show what can be done in such a short time, and how much improvement was made from conditions far worse than what we have today – the dictator's apologists notwithstanding, that the country is worse off now than when he and his wife were stealing the country blind.

This progress was cut off by the August '87 coup attempt. But the economy quickly rallied, and in two years recovered a great deal of the ground we had lost. We were on the verge of a second take off when the December 1989 coup broke out. It drained the last drop of confidence in our future from all but the hardest spirits and shattered our image abroad.

Still we persevered, achieving gains that admittedly continue to fall short of the galloping needs of a fast-growing population, but real gains nonetheless: Improved health care, increased housing and, one of the proudest achievements we share with the legislature, free secondary education. Six hundred sixty thousand youth immediately availed themselves of it; another 200,000 private school students received scholarship grants under another recent law. Eighty thousand new classrooms have been built: the first preparation of the nation for the future of economic competition, which will take place in the highly educated minds of the youth.

We have made the first serious effort to arrest environmental degradation already so far advanced in the previous regime that it set up an agency that did nothing about it anyway. We have pushed agrarian reform beyond the point of no return, almost completing its coverage of rice and corn. Its extension to other agricultural activities is proceeding at a pace consistent with our resolve to achieve for the farmer the prosperity promised by agrarian reform, and not just its bare legal implementation.

Indeed, we started to make up for our losses, and kept on going through the Gulf crisis which doubled the price of energy and introduced the element of a tremendous uncertainty, not only about our economy but that of the world as well.

You might ask: Having lost so much so easily, what was the worth of all that effort?

With such reversals of fortune, is progress for our country a hope in vain?

Paul says that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character and character, hope. The good we do is never lost. Some of it remains, if not in material goods, then in a deeper experience, a more practiced hand, and a spirit made stronger by that which failed to break it – stronger to meet greater challenges ahead.

But in one thing we grew from strength to strength – in the enlargement of our democratic space and the strengthening of our democracy.

Every calamity tested the capacity of democracy to absorb distress, find relief, and meet the absolute necessities of the people without the least curtailment of freedom or compromise of rights.

Against our economic gains that are ever hostages to fortune stands one steadfast, unalloyed achievement: our democracy destined, I believe, to outlive our problems and deck with the graces of liberty the material progress of our future. That achievement is better seen from the disinterested distance of foreign admirers than from the myopic view of those at home who wish to destroy it. *(Applause)* It is an achievement entirely in our power to preserve and enhance.

Visitors from the new Germany asked me what things strengthen democracy. Economic progress, naturally, I said. But the attainment of that depends on external factors more than on the will of a developing country. But there is a way to strengthen democracy that is within any country's reach. That is through the empowerment of the people. This is obvious to a government like ours that came to power by its means, as well as to a people like the Germans who attained complete freedom in the same way.

But empowering the people means more than just giving them elections every three years. It means enlarging their contact with government beyond elections to its daily workings so that the vast resources of one support the initiatives of the other, and the policies of government are refined by the insights of the people. Ngunit ang pagkakaloob ng kapangyarihan sa mamamayan ay nangangahulugang hindi lamang ng pagdaraos ng halalan tuwing ikatlong taon. Kailangang pagyamanin ang kanilang pagkakadiit sa pamahalaan – sa araw-araw na gawain ng pamahalaan – upang ang malawak na kayamanan ng isa ay makatulong sa mga pagkukusa ng kabila at ang mga patakaran ng pamahalaan ay paglinangin ng mga mamamayan. By this means the lives of the people shall be constantly improved and the people themselves empowered by the habit of directing their own government. The constant revision of flawed policies and the wider application of good ones are possible only by bringing together the people and the government. People empowerment, through people's organizations, NGOs, foundations and cooperatives, is the surest means we know to make government mirror the aspirations of the people. *(Applause)*

In the past, the idea was to give the people just enough power to elect their mistakes and suffer the consequences until the next elections. Elections were a safety valve. We want elections to be just one of other more effective means to bring the people into government and government to the people, to make it truly a participatory democracy.

This is the only way to end the character of total war that elections have assumed, where the aim is the division of spoils and the victims are not just the losers but those who voted for them, too. Such elections are like Russian roulette where your chances are five to one your life will not improve, and one to five you will blow out your brains.

Participatory democracy will end the practice of punishing provinces and municipalities for the wrong vote in the last poll. It will separate elections, where the people vote for their respective favorites, from the provision of public service which every Filipino has a right to expect from the government, regardless of how he voted.

This administration has made large steps in that direction. To the disappointment of those who marched with me against the Marcos regime, my administration has plowed resources into

regions and provinces where I was cheated in the snap elections.

The politics of revenge has had its day. *(Applause)*

The organized participation of the people in daily government may provide the stabilizing element that government has always lacked. Policies have radically changed with each administration, yet the basic needs of its unchanging constituencies have not been met: less bureaucracy for business, more public services and infrastructure support for agriculture and industry, an economic safety net for the common man. The active participation of the people in government will lend proper direction and continuity to policy.

This is what I wish for most: That after me, the continuity of our work is not broken so that things well done shall be completed, and the same mistakes avoided by succeeding administrations. In this way, nothing done shall go to waste, and the light of a misplaced candle shall still be valued for the light it sheds on the things to avoid.

I am not asking that all my programs be blindly followed by my successor. God knows, we have made mistakes. But surely our objective is right – the improvement of our people's lives. And the new way is much better than those before. To give the people greater power over their lives is the essence of democracy that we must strive to bring out completely.

These ideas, articulated in the Kabisig movement, may not have been well received by this body. It was wrongly projected. I should make it clear that the Kabisig and the whole movement of people's organizations that I have tried to encourage will be campaigning hard for one candidate only – the Filipino people and no one else. *(Applause)*

Give the people-power movement another chance, for it will go on regardless. I ask you to consider that we have tried the politics of spoils and patronage for half a century, with no better result than the stagnation of the country in a region where everyone else is racing ahead.

The formula for success is said to be a dictatorial government. But we tried that already, with worse results than the most irresponsible democracy can produce. Besides, the spirit of our race will not accept a dictatorship; and memories, fresh as the scars it left, will not let us consider that option again. Democracy is the only way for us. We must therefore find the ways by which the pitfalls that go with its blessings are reduced, while its inherent strengths are brought to the fore. Of those strengths, the most promising is people power, a reserve for nation-building we tapped only once in our history with such marvelous results.

A detailed report of the performance of government is before you. The legislative agenda – principally the Local Government Code, the Civil Service Code, revenue enhancement measures, and electoral reforms – has been communicated to the Senate President and to the Speaker of the House.

This is the last time I shall address you on such an occasion as this. Let us clear the air between us.

I could have made things easier for myself if I had opted for the "popular."

I could have repudiated the foreign debt, won the passing praise of a greatly relieved people, and the lasting contempt of a devastated country.

I could have opted for outright hostility towards the international banking system and invited its retaliation. But the only result would have been to weaken the present democracy against the conspiracies of the former government which contracted the miserable debt in the first place. I would have taken the chance if I were the only one at risk, but I had a country to take care of. *(Applause)*

I could have called for an elected constitutional convention. Surveys showed that an elected convention was the popular choice to draft a new Constitution. But I believed it was more important to draft a Constitution and submit it for ratification in the shortest time possible, and hold elections immediately. The people and the army needed a full elected government and a Constitution around with which to rally in defense of freedom.

I could not afford the luxury of the popular by waiting out the endless deliberations of an elected convention, like the 1971 Constitutional Convention. And besides, what was so great about that experience? After a year of talk and scandal, the final draft was prepared in Malacañang, approved by the frightened Convention, and ratified in a fraudulent plebiscite.

I could have made things easier for myself if I had allowed the executive to influence the decisions of constitutional commissions. I might have spared myself deep embarrassments by interfering with the judgments of the courts. But I uphold the independence of these bodies. I am convinced it is in all our best interest to respect an independence that may thwart the government's will from time to time, but is yet our best assurance of justice when we will need justice most. *(Applause)*

I firmly believe in the freedom of the press. And I accept the criticisms poured on me, painful as they are, as part and parcel of the hazards of public service, and conducive to its honest performance. True, I have sued for libel, but I did not use the power of the presidency to advance my cause. And this is shown by the fact that four years later my case continues to drag on. *(Applause)* I have not forgotten that what my husband wanted most in prison was for the public to hear the side of freedom, and no newspaper would print it.

I submitted myself to the judicial process as an ordinary citizen and exposed myself to indignities a president should not endure. But I want to encourage people to seek redress in the law, despite the inconvenience, rather than in vindictiveness, which has no end. I want them to make the cause of justice for one the cause of justice for all. *(Applause)*

I have consoled myself that great men like Gandhi were not spared criticisms either. But, regardless of it, he pursued the path he believed was true, mindful only of harmful effects on the people, but not of the consequences to him. He believed that God demands no less of us than that we follow our conscience. God will take care of the rest.

I could have done the popular thing in the last administration and arranged a nicer retirement for myself. But my instructions to PNB, DBP, GSIS, SSS and Land Bank were explicit: no behest loans and no special favors *(Applause)* whether to relative, friend or political supporter. This accounts for their sterling performance, for the unprecedented public faith in their competence and integrity, and for the incalculable contribution, particularly of PNB and the Land Bank, to the development of cooperatives and the financing of small and medium enterprises, wherein lies the strongest hope of progress in these times.

We can roll back prices at the drop of a hat and spare ourselves all the aggravation, but we learned that hasty rollbacks exacted a heavier, long-term cost on the economy and, ultimately, on the people, than they had saved.

I could have done any of the things calculated to win a passing popularity at home. I could have thrown away by so-called popular solutions the goodwill we have built up in financial circles by the strict performance of our obligations. This is the goodwill that accounts for the continued support extended to the Philippine Assistance Program (PAP). Anyway, most of the pledges to the PAP are redeemable in the next administration.

I could have said, "Let my successor be presented with the bill for my popularity today." But it is the people who would pay the price, and I am not made that way. *(Applause)*

I did not always adopt the ideal solutions proposed by those who have the luxury of contemplation. Government often had to do what pressing realities compelled it. And if the government sometimes lacked better choices, it never lacked the sincere desire to do good. *(Applause)*

I could have promoted only military officers popular with the press, and ignored the experience of a democratic government that has been the principal military objective of the rebel forces and an insurgency that just does not know when to quit. But I chose instead commanders of proven courage, leadership, and fidelity to the Constitution.

I could do the smart thing still, and do the things my opponents unfairly charge me of preparing – rigging the elections in 1992, the way I did not rig the ratification of the Constitution, the national elections, and the local elections; the way they rigged elections from 1969 to 1986. But my instructions to the military and police are explicit. Let them hear it again:

The right of the soldier and the policeman is merely to cast his vote; his greater and solemn obligation is to assure the right of others to cast their votes and get them honestly counted. *(Applause)* No soldier has the right to combine with his comrades to campaign for a person or party and deliver to them a block of the military vote. No member of the military shall lend his name, prestige, and the influence of his position to anyone's campaign. The same holds true for the police. *(Applause)*

The military has earned the people's trust as the spearhead of their liberation and the constant defender of their democracy. To these honors it is my aim to add the distinction of shepherding our democracy through its first political succession by clean and peaceful elections. *(Applause)*

I will not preside as Commander-in-Chief over the kind of military that cheated the opposition in 1978, and me in 1986. *(Applause)* That would insult the memory of the man to whom I dedicate this last address to the joint Houses of Congress, and stain the proud achievement of this nation in 1986.

I specifically charge Chief of Staff Gen. Lisandro Abadia and PNP Dir. Gen. Cesar Nazareno with the responsibility to assure clean and honest elections. *(Applause)* While they may not fear my displeasure because I will not be President then, they will face the judgment of the disappointed country.

Yes, I could have done all those things that win wide acclaim, exiting as grandly as any president could wish. But while my power as president ends in 1992, my responsibility as a Filipino for the well-being of my country goes beyond it to my grave. *(Applause)* A great part of that responsibility is to do the best I can today, according to my best lights, while I have the power to do it.

As President, I have never prayed for anything for myself; only for our people. I have been called an international beggar by the military rebels. Begging does not become me, yet – perhaps – it is what I had to do. I could have kept my pride and held aloof, but that would not have helped our people. And it is for them that I was placed in this office. *(Applause)*

Someone who will do better may stand in this place next year, for I believe in the inexhaustible giftedness of the Filipino people. I only hope that he will be someone who will sincerely mean you well. *(Applause)*

I hope that history will judge me as favorably as our people still regard me because, as God is my witness, I honestly did the best I could. No more can be asked of any man. *(Applause)*

On June 30, 1992, the traditional ceremony of political succession will unfold at the Luneta. The last time it was done that way was in 1965. I shall be there with you to proudly witness the event. This is the glory of democracy, that its most solemn moment should be the peaceful transfer of power. *(Applause)*

Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat at paalam. *(Standing ovation)*

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

THE SPEAKER. On the part of the House, the session is adjourned.

THE SENATE PRESIDENT. Sa panig ng Senado, itinitindig ang pinagsamang pulong ng Kongreso.

It was 4:55 p.m.