

RECORD OF THE SENATE

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1996

OPENING OF THE SESSION

At 3:01 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Ernesto M. Maceda, called the session to order.

The President. The 38th session in the Second Regular Session of the Tenth Congress is hereby called to order.

Let us all stand for the opening prayer to be led by Sen. Orlando S. Mercado.

Everybody rose for the opening prayer.

PRAYER

Senator Mercado.

Dear Lord, why is it so difficult to talk of being selfless? Is it because we should not talk about it but manifest it?

Is it because those who proclaim it, more often than not, use it as a camouflage of their selfish motives?

Is it because there are no true selfless politicians? Or is this an exaggerated perception of those who blame us for all that goes wrong?

Lord, show us the true meaning of selflessness. Remind us that this trait can manifest itself even in small and seemingly inconsequential ways, even if they may never be as great and noble as the selflessness that You have shown by sending Your only begotten Son to offer Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of others. But this is the measure that we should use.

Amen.

ROLL CALL

The President. The Secretary will please call the roll.

The Secretary, reading:

- Senator Heherson T. Alvarez
Senator Edgardo J. Angara
Senator Anna Dominique M.L. Coseteng . Present
Senator Franklin M. Drilon Present
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile

- Senator Marcelo B. Fernan
Senator Juan M. Flavier Present
Senator Neptali A. Gonzales
Senator Ernesto F. Herrera Present
Senator Gregorio B. Honasan
Senator Gloria M. Macapagal Present
Senator Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr. Present
Senator Orlando S. Mercado Present
Senator Blas F. Ople
Senator Sergio R. Osmeña III
Senator Ramon B. Revilla
Senator Raul S. Roco
Senator Alberto G. Romulo Present
Senator Miriam D. Santiago Present
Senator Leticia R. Shahani
Senator Vicente C. Sotto III
Senator Francisco S. Tatad Present
Senator Freddie N. Webb
The President Present

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

The President. With only 11 senators present, there is no quorum.

The session is suspended, if there is no objection. [There was none.]

It was 3:03 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 3:06 p.m., the session was resumed.

The President. The session is resumed.

SECOND ROLL CALL

The President. The Secretary will call the roll.

The Secretary, reading:

- Senator Heherson T. Alvarez Present
Senator Edgardo J. Angara Present*
Senator Anna Dominique M.L. Coseteng .. Present
Senator Franklin M. Drilon Present
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile Present*
Senator Marcelo B. Fernan Present
Senator Juan M. Flavier Present
Senator Ernesto F. Herrera Present

* Arrived after the roll call

Senator Mercado. I have not discussed this matter with the Philippine Air Force. But from what I have heard and from what I have read, I think there are initial negotiations on the matter. Initially, Mr. President, the Pakistanis, as we are aware, purchased F-16s which, in spite of the fact that they were paid for, were not delivered to Pakistan because of some objections of Congress.

Initially, there was talk of the same being offered to us. But the latest that I heard is that Indonesia is the one seriously negotiating, albeit there has been a snag in the negotiations after the demonstrations in support of Megawati Sukarno Putri ranted some members of the U.S. Congress. There has been talk that this would be put on hold.

I think if we talk about the F-16s, that would be a possibility, Mr. President.

Senator Enrile. Are these F-16s, Mr. President, fully equipped with the weaponry available to an F-16 released to the US military?

Senator Mercado. From what I have read, I think that is the problem. In the negotiations, one of the stickier points to be negotiated would be the type of missiles that will be provided with it. We are not aware of anything that has assumed a level of specificity in the area of what is being offered, either to Indonesia or the Philippines. But there would be available if the F-16 is a consideration.

We are aware that there are many very effective missiles—air-to-air. We have the sidewinder and the sparrow missiles; the air-to-surface missiles, the harpoon, the maverick, and the Penguin 3. Buster bombs and rockets would be there, and quite a compendium of lethal weapons in one of the most effective fighting machines today.

Senator Enrile. Mr. President, the Philippine Army is, of course, a very important component of our military organization. There is no question that it must be supported right away to modernize itself.

In the programming of this amount that we are discussing, which of the two services—Navy and Air Force—would be given a margin of advantage, if I will use the word, Mr. President, in terms of procurement?

Senator Mercado. Mr. President, the prioritization is that the Air Force is No. 1. and the Navy is No. 2. The last priority would be the Army, in terms of how much we are spending. But this does not mean that any service is less important in the fulfillment of its functions to perform its mission.

Senator Enrile. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you very much, distinguished sponsor.

Senator Mercado. Thank you very much, too, Mr. President.

Senator Tatad. Mr. President.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavier]. The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF P.S. JT. RES. NO. 7

Senator Tatad. Mr. President, I move to suspend consideration of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 7.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavier]. Is there any objection? [Silence] There being none, consideration of the resolution is so suspended.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP (Economic Affairs Committee)

Senator Tatad. Mr. President, I move that we consider the organization of the Committee on Economic Affairs. This is a committee of nine. The chair has been designated.

For the majority, I would like to nominate the following members: Senators Herrera, Enrile, Drilon, Mercado, and Flavier.

I ask that the distinguished Minority Leader be recognized to nominate the members for the minority.

Senator Gonzales. For the minority, Mr. President, we are nominating Senators Macapagal, Magsaysay Jr., and Osmeña III.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavier]. The following have been nominated: Senators Herrera, Enrile, Drilon, Mercado, Flavier, Macapagal, Magsaysay and Osmeña.

It is so constituted.

MOTION OF SENATOR TATAD (Reconsideration of Composition of Conference Committee on S. No. 950)

Senator Tatad. Mr. President, I move that we reconsider the composition of the Senate panel to the Conference Committee on Senate Bill No. 950: Senators Drilon, Fernan, and

Shahani. So from a panel of three, it becomes a panel of six.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavie]. The following are included to the committee for the Bicameral Conference on Senate Bill No. 950: Senators Drilon, Fernan, and Shahani.

It is so constituted.

**CONSIDERATION OF P.S. RES. NO. 616
(Ad Hoc Committee on Illegal Drugs)**

Senator Tatad. Mr. President, I move that we consider Proposed Senate Resolution No. 616. This is the committee proposing the creation of a standing committee on illegal drugs.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavie]. Is there any objection? [Silence] There being none, the motion is approved.

Consideration of Proposed Senate Resolution No. 616 is now in order. With the permission of the Body, the Secretary will read only the title of the resolution without prejudice to inserting in the *Record* the whole text thereof.

The Secretary. Proposed Senate Resolution No. 616, entitled

RESOLUTION CONVERTING THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ILLEGAL DRUGS TO A PERMANENT COMMITTEE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 13, RULE X OF THE RULES OF THE SENATE

The following is the whole text of the resolution:

Proposed Senate Resolution No. 616

RESOLUTION CONVERTING THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ILLEGAL DRUGS TO A PERMANENT COMMITTEE AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 13, RULE X OF THE RULES OF THE SENATE

WHEREAS, the Philippines faces a formidable dilemma arising from the uncontrolled proliferation of illegal drug activities, the menacing effects of which are highly visible in our society;

WHEREAS, the illegal drugs trafficking has become a global problem where our country is not spared. In fact, the reports reveal the presence of

members of international drug syndicate operating in Asia with Manila as its main base;

WHEREAS, the Senate for its part, signifying its uncompromising stand against drug trafficking, sponsored the passage of R. A. No. 7659 to strengthen the penal provisions of R. A. No. 6425 reimposing death penalty on certain drug offenses, and last February 26, 1996, Senate Resolution No. 21, entitled "Resolution Concurring in the Ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotic Substances," was adopted;

WHEREAS, to attune the system to the present condition and to be more responsive in addressing this serious problem, the new Senate leadership finds it meritorious to convert the Ad Hoc Committee on Illegal Drugs into a permanent committee. Now, Therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, To convert, as it hereby converts, the Ad Hoc Committee on Illegal Drugs to a Permanent Committee.

Adopted.

Senator Tatad. I ask that the distinguished gentleman from Cebu, Quezon City, and Nueva Ecija, the Hon. Vicente C. Sotto III, be recognized to sponsor the resolution.

The Presiding Officer [Sen. Flavie]. Senator Sotto is recognized.

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH OF SENATOR SOTTO

Senator Sotto. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, Senate Resolution No. 616 is introduced by no less than the Senate President, Sen. Ernesto Maceda.

We have time and again mentioned in many privilege speeches that we have delivered here in this august hall the reasons why we have to prioritize this legislation on illegal drugs.

The creation of this committee by the passage of this resolution will definitely prioritize the many pieces of legislation now pending in the different committees. It is not only very timely that we do this now not only to address the growing menace and the growing problem but because