

THEN A DREAM, NOW A REALITY-
A GRAND DECEPTION AND A GIGANTIC HOAX
OCTOBER 26, 2004
(PRIVILEGE SPEECH by SEN. ALFREDO S.LIM)

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen:

Last October 5, 2004, I stood on a question of privilege.

Mr. President I stood then because of a dream. And, I shared it with you because it was worth sharing.

Today, I rise again but without any dream to share, rather to speak of a reality, that you and I are worth pondering.

I stand, because I am wary of what is going on in our country today.

Mr. President, recently, we had been horrified by the spate of killings. Crimes brazenly and dastardly perpetrated; crimes that stained our country with the blood of the ordinary and those who enjoy the privilege of holding key positions in the different departments of our government. Crimes that filled our hearts with bitterness, hatred and revenge particularly from the loved ones of those, who perished through these ignominious acts.

The brazen killings occurring daily in our country is alarming, giving rise to apprehension and concern, that the peace and order condition in this country, is being annihilated and a regime of lawlessness, instituted in its place.

Innocent and unwary victims succumb to assassins' bullets in broad daylight, in their homes, government offices and public places. The perpetrators of heinous crimes carry out their attacks without compunction, fear nor hesitation, because they easily escape and conveniently elude apprehension, for they believe that crime pays.

I rise, because I am wary as I feel we are veering towards the dark moments of our political history, earlier emancipated by the blood of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., a martyr and former colleague, who had unselfishly dedicated his life, so that we and the next generation may endure the splendor of the gleaming dawn.

I am wary because I dread the day when violence and lawlessness, shall reign high in every space and corner of our country, when the rule of law is no longer the beacon that lights our destiny.

Mr. President, a few days ago we were appalled by the following incidents:

In the early morning of October 18, 2004. caliber .45 pistols and armalite rifles pierced the heart and body of P/Col. Manolo Martinez, a member of the Manila's Finest. Adding ignominy and insult to his cold-blooded murder, ambushed not anywhere, but in front of the Sta. Mesa Station. His assassins knew his comrades-in-arms, were within close range. Yet said killers were that daring in carrying out the assault. They fled on board a passenger jeep more emboldened, by the absence of resistance. Sadly, no one accepted their gun-firing challenge, because they knew the pride of the Manila's Finest is nothing, but sheer memories initially absorbed by the Integrated National Police, wrecked and gone awry with the PNP.

The scenes were outrageous because they were not merely directed to the citizenry, but to the Philippine National Police, as well.

The brutality however, did not end with the killing of P/Col. Martinez. Thirty minutes later, or at 10:00 a.m. of the same fateful day, lethal bullets of three unknown van-riding assailants struck in Lipa City and snuffed out the life of PO2 Bernardo Amazona, assigned to the Traffic Management Group in Camp Crame, Quezon City.

But my God, their cop- slaying spree did not end there, as if the thrill of killing two cops was not enough.

Two days later, in the wee hours of the morning of October 20, 2004, another member of the Manila's Finest, Police Inspector Emmanuel Sanchez and his wife were fatally stabbed in their sleep, by a suspected intruder- robber.

I was once a cop, who rose from the ranks, a veteran of death-defying shooting encounters and street fights with notorious criminals. Yet, I have to candidly bare, never in the history of the Manila's Finest, did it happen that a cop was ambushed, shot and killed in the premises of his own precinct. His own command.

In retrospect, I cherished the past accolades for the Manila's Finest, when in my time killing police officers were rare as it would be suicidal, for would- be cop killers respected the etched axiom in the premises of the WPD's headquarters heralding – GO SPREAD THE WORD AND TELL THE PASSERS BY, THAT IN THIS LITTLE WORLD MEN KNEW HOW TO DIE.

We heard of the brutal murder of Atty. Arbet Sta. Ana- Yongco, the lady lawyer who prosecuted the parricide case of cult leader Ruben Ecleo Jr. She was shot at pointblank range inside her house and office, in Zapatera, Cebu City and the assassin just casually walked away after the shooting. The cult leader was also charged with having masterminded the killing of his two

brothers-in-law and father-in-law, as lawmen pursued his arrest.

But, the quaint development in connection with the investigation of the murder of the lady prosecutor, is the sudden relief of the NBI Regional Director in Cebu City.

It has been reported that the public prosecutor handling the case has already withdrawn. What impels him to withdraw from the case? Has he been terrorized? Why a sudden change of attitude towards this case, specially now that blood has been spilled?

Judges have not been spared as many of them, mostly handling drug related cases, had also been mercilessly killed or ambushed in line of duty, obviously either to deter them from meting out the supreme penalty on convicts, found guilty of violating drug laws or as reprisal for convicting, those charged in their courts.

Broadcasters and media practitioners were similarly victims of the unabated, reprehensible and atrocious killings, thus causing serious trepidation and anxiety to those who continue to expose without fear, the venalities and anomalies in the government and the public sector of our society.

For instance, On October 18, 2004, an anti-gambling radioman from Tandag, Surigao del Sur, Eldy

Sablan, was shot three times by unidentified assassins, killing him instantly.

I recall that in the 80s, the late Vice President Pelaez was himself a victim of an attempted assassination and exclaimed to Gen. Tomas Karingal: "General, What's happening to our country?" Ironically, months later, Gen. Karingal himself was assassinated in broad daylight in a public place.

Yes, Mr. President, what happened decades ago is also happening these days, the only difference being that this time, it is getting worse and the perpetrators are more audacious, in carrying wicked pursuits.

Mr. President, I am constrained to ask: Why are these senseless killings happening to our country? Where are we heading to?

People have lost their respect for others' lives and are wont to appease evil, day by day because, rather than be upright and civilized in their actions, they adhere to the power of the guns to achieve their goals, attain their purposes, get even with their adversaries and the most vicious of all, exchange their self- respect and honor with money, gold and wealth.

Morality and respect for the rule of law are getting rarer and rarer. Has our society gone bankrupt of virtues, righteousness and heroism?

Mr. President, the gruesome murders are quite alarming, not only because of the impudent manners through which they were executed, but also considering the positions and status of the victims.

These incidents undoubtedly blur our future. Internationally, these erode and render bleak our economic and cultural progress. Foreign investors are certainly being frightened from investing here, with tourism suffering its lowest projected expectations.

Guided by the wisdom of a Greek philosopher who said, "Let us tame the savageness of men to make the life gentle in this world," I feel as a Senator and as an ordinary citizen, my solemn task is to search for the light, amidst the hovering darkness, that prevails in our civil and political life.

What could have been the possible causes of the breakdown of law and order?

Let me cite them:

The police which is the armed component of the criminal justice system and explicitly mandated by

law, to “maintain peace and order and take all necessary steps to ensure public safety” and the local chief executives, who are tasked with the responsibility of maintaining peace and order, in their respective areas of jurisdictions, are primarily to blame for that breakdown.

Maintaining police visibility in public places, is an effective deterrence in the commission of crimes.

It is an integral part of the crime prevention and control program.

The prosecutorial arm of the government and the courts are not entirely faultless, because of the exceedingly slow grinding of justice, potential criminals remain free and roaming around the community, waiting for an opportunity to strike and commit further criminal acts, while their cases are mothballing, before the prosecutors and the courts.

In my humble way, I take the liberty of postulating for your honors considerations, proposed solution to these problems.

Crime prevention and control, to be effective, requires the active, integrated and synchronized effort of the five pillars, of the Philippine criminal justice system. They must put their acts together and

orchestrate a collective effort, to fight crime and lawlessness.

Of equal significance is the active and honest involvement of local chief executives, who are explicitly tasked the responsibility of maintaining peace and order and promoting the welfare of their constituents, within the range of their respective jurisdiction.

I would like to underscore, however, Mr. President, that the people's involvement, participation and support in the maintenance of peace and order, are indispensable. We must realize that the success and efficacy of efforts to suppress these criminal activities, are ultimately reposed on the willingness, readiness and courage of the public, to come forth and assist the government, in the investigation and prosecution in building up of cases against them.

In fine, it is imperative that the five pillars of our the criminal justice system should work conjunctively in combating criminalities. Toward this end the Peace and Order Council, which is the coordinating mechanism of the five pillars of the Criminal Justice System, should be mobilized at all levels, from national to local.

Complementary thereto, in order to enable the local chief executives to perform their duties more effectively, I am advocating through a bill I filed with

this august chamber, the grant of more substantive powers to them, in the administration and operation of local police units.

The bill seeks to reorganize the present Philippine National Police (PNP) into one police organization with two major components: national and local. Even under the two tiered set- up which is well within the parameters of Sec. 6 Art. XVI of the 1987 Constitution, prescribing "one police force which shall be national in scope," the government can continue availing of the built-in advantages of a unitary police organization, while at the same time improving the capability of enforcing the law and maintaining peace and order at all local levels. Although the national character of the police force is retained, city or municipal mayors are given wider latitude of participation, in the supervision and control of PNP stations, in their respective jurisdictions.

We all know that the glorious days of local police forces then under the local chief executives, were cut short by the integration of local police under the Integrated Act of 1975 during Martial Law, with the Philippine Constabulary serving as its nucleus and the local police force as its civilian components.

The administrative control and supervision was under the NAPOLCOM, while the local executives

exercised operational supervision and direction over the INP units assigned within their respective localities.

But, the police set-up under the command of the military component, was disastrous and severely eroded the civilian character of the INP. And, the multiplicity in the governance of the PC-INP, resulted in an inefficient police service.

There were inequities too, because the military component had superior benefits and privileges, to the disadvantage of the civilian police component.

Hence, the Constitutional Commission of 1986 took cognizance of these structural errors and devised a scheme to put an end to the problem, but the problem lay on the undisputed truth, that those who drafted this law, probably overlooked certain loopholes.

Indeed, it is still being practiced to assign cops anywhere at the pleasure of their superior officers. There can be no protest even for a minor misdemeanor, the erring cop can be "frozen", assigned and transferred to the far-flung Mindanao spot, away from his family. Disoriented with his new tasks in an unfamiliar assignment and place among newly acquainted fellow cops. He lost close rapport with the original colleagues, in his former assignment and thus, endeavors to make new friends, familiarize himself with the new

surroundings, for an effective fulfillment of his inherent tasks. But it could be short-lived because an order transferring him again, to another place is not a remote possibility. The camaraderie which he was developing among his peers is continuously lost, for as long as his removal and re-assignment remain. The eventual loss of this "camaraderie" among members of the police force, only makes them indifferent to each other.

Apropos to this theory, it has to be stressed, that in this present set-up where a PNP-member does not appear to be directly and personally accountable, to his chief executive for all his misdeeds and infractions, his discipline is necessarily prone to deteriorate. A member, if vulnerable to vices and temptation, will surely succumb to these evils being dispersed all over new area of responsibility, amidst strangers-colleagues and the similarly unknown constituents in the place. Strangers, therefore, to the police and vice-versa, resident and/or individuals in his area of responsibility are, thus normally beyond reach being skeptical and suspicious, to the detriment of prompt police service.

Indeed, the return of the direct administrative and operational supervision and control of the local police force to its chief executive, will necessarily enhance and improve the discipline of its members. It is expected to yield better, competent and consummate service to the public, because no other, but said Chief Executive is

accountable and responsible for all the misdeeds, abuses and wrong doings, if any, of his solely supervised and controlled local government unit. More than anybody, he can strictly instill the discipline on his local police unit, for the good and benefit of their constituency.

In retrospect, let us acknowledge the worsening state of law and order, the rise in criminality, the boldness and temerity of the criminals, the deteriorating faith of the citizens in the government.

Let us divest ourselves of any hypocrisy, in admitting that these are all the unforeseen, the inevitable and deplorable consequences of our ineffectual, police force. Thus, we have to be firm, resolute, unyielding in **acting now**, before it becomes late. Let us work together in legally returning the exclusive control and supervision and command of the police force, to its local government unit. We cannot fail, because the past is a mute witness, that those days when the local chief executive, either of a city or municipality, exercised absolute operational control on the police force of the particular locality, there was less bickering for power struggle in the force, lesser graft and corruption, since the responsibility is confined to an area, where familiarity does not breed contempt, but effective and immediate police service because policemen were the embodiment, of legitimate authority on whom, any citizen could depend for protection.

Let us then bring back the glory, the pride and the prestige to these cops, who shall again be destined, to yield obedience to a lone commander, and their loyalty to their constituents, all within a confined area of jurisdiction.

Mr. President, I am also soliciting the assistance of DILG Secretary Angelo Reyes and PNP Director General Edgardo B. Aglipay, to look deeper into these cases particularly, the case of P/Col. Manolo Martinez. And, in the course of their investigation, I fervently hope, that extraordinary skill, care and prudence shall be adhered in **ferreting out the truth**, rather than **perverse it** through the **condemnable** and **inordinate use of fall guys**. I wish the investigating police officers, shall consistently refrain from recklessly, taking pride in announcing to the world, that a crime has been finally solved and the perpetrators have been arrested, when in truth and in fact, this is a grand deception and a gigantic hoax committed on the family of Col. Manolo Martinez and the citizens in general.

Mr. President, I have spoken. If we have to act, we have to act now before it's too late! I leave everything to you for your honor's consideration.

Thank you.