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Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist Conference, 'We Have Communism on the Run in the Philippines'

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Summary:

Jose M. Hernandez announces to the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist Conference that "communism is on the run in the Philippines."

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WE HAVE COMMUNISM ON THE RUN IN THE PHILIPPINES

by Jose M. Hernandez, Chief Philippine Delegation
Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist Conference

A great many people have said time and again that the Philippines is the one bright spot in the Pacific in the fight against Communism. This is largely true because we can say with absolute certainty that the major military operations against organized dissidence have stopped. The backbone of the Communist movement in the Philippines has been broken and only a few hundred Hukbalahaps or HUKS for short remain in the hills and caves. They have become wandering marauders, living at best a hand-to-mouth existence, preying on innocent civilians, and raiding solitary villages when the occasion offers. They are a poorly organized, demoralized, and completely homeless group. To all intents and purposes their only salvation lies in surrender to the government of the Republic of the Philippines.

If these die-hard remnants of a once powerful and methodical striking force were to give up their arms, return to the ways of peace, and face trial, they might live to see themselves settled on a piece of land which they can call their own—to have and to hold—till the end of their lives. But if they persist as lawless bandits in the mountains, they must face starvation or death from the military forces.

Perhaps this picture of the face of Communism in the Philippines will induce the outsider to conclude that the government and people of our island Republic have no more reason to worry and that they can rest secure that Communism will always be as far as the moon and will never disturb our peace

and happiness. That would be a wrong conclusion. We are deeply aware of the definitive threat of Communism on our shores. We know that the bastions of freedom have fallen and are still falling beneath the iron heel of the Communist aggressor all over the continent of Asia. We cannot disregard the fact that Indo-China is just three air-hours from the Philippines and that Hongkong and Tainch lie only a few hundred miles from Manila. We in the Philippines know that the bell tolls not only for the Asian peoples around us but also for us Filipinos. It is our fervent prayer that when that bell tolls it shall not be for ignominious death and frustration but for the consummation of the dream of liberty and democracy in the Orient.

Communism is on the run in the Philippines mainly because of our abiding faith in God Who rules the destinies of nations. This faith has been unshakable for the last four hundred years. And we know that God will not abandon us in this hour of grave peril because God knows that Communism is the most dreadful enemy not only of man but also of God Himself. And we in the Philippines pray with our hearts that all brave men who are fighting Communism today in thought, word, and deed outside our country that may be definitively destroyed, may succeed in their efforts and finally achieve the peace of a united and free world.

Communism is on the run in the Philippines because of the leadership and dynamism of our new President—a man of the people, a man of action but not of words, an honest man, a man of God, an enemy of international Communism. He has fought with tooth and nail every effort of the Communist to infiltrate the ranks of our Army and the offices of our government. He has chased the Huks all over the hills and mountains of the Philippines until the last citadels of dissidence have been destroyed. And lately when the notorious leader of the Communists, LUIS TARUC surrendered, President Macsaysay resisted every

effort of the outlaw to make use of his surrender for propaganda purposes. President Magsaysay has refused to give Taruc an interview because he knows that Taruc is a common outlaw and should be treated so.

Democracy has undergone and is undergoing a process akin to counter-reformation in the Philippines. The centralized, large landed estates traditionally held in medieval feudalism by absentee landlords have been purchased by the government and resold at cost and on instalment basis to the tenants who have tilled the soil for many, many generations. Thus, much of the resentment and even hatred which have caused political disaffection in the past has been removed.

Moreover, the new President has taken the government to the people in the villages and remote towns. He has started a program for social and economic amelioration of the masses - the poor and underprivileged and forgotten little people who form the bulk of our population. Credit is being extended to the small farmer as well as the poor laborer. The hungry are being fed and the indigent clothed and housed. But with all these projects, we are still far away from perfection. There is more work to do. And these facts probably explain why President Magsaysay could not come when he was invited sometime ago by the brave and determined President of the Republic of Korea, to form the first Anti-Communist Union in Asia.

But there is no question that our hearts are with the peoples who are determined to be free from bondage to Communism. The record of our Battalion Combat Teams in Korea, small and insignificant though they may have been, stands as an eloquent manifestation of our cooperation not only with Korea but also with the entire free world.

To help President Magsaysay in his painstaking and noble task of unifying his people in the struggle against Communism and in improving the lot of the masses civic organizations have been established to spread the necessary information concerning the real purpose of Communism and of its violence :

and diabolical machinations. For instance there is the Committee for free Asia, the citizens Committee for Good Government, Catholic Action of the Philippines, and lately, the Committee for Philippine Agricultural Development and Rehabilitation. These organizations are teaching the people to organize community centers and to carry on better programs of health, educational, and moral improvement. Farmers are being organized and helped with farm implements, fertilizers, and up-to-date agricultural and marketing information.

The orphans of war and the victims of the HUKBALAHAP degradation and the violence are being rehabilitated on small farms in Mindanao by the EDCOR a project of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and finally the Army in cooperation with UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE and the knights of Columbus and other organizations has embarked on a psychological warfare against Communism.

Communism has had a history of subversion and duplicity in the Philippines as in other countries. It started in 1920 and gathered members and sympathizers all over the country for the main purpose of undermining and destroying the government. It crept into the labor union, it entered the government through the back door, it penetrated society and formed a fighting military force - the HUKBALAHAPS. When the government realized the true aims and purposes of the Communist movement it outlawed the Communist Party, the HUKBALAHAPS and all Communist organizations. Today any member of the Communist Party is arrested and put in jail.

But it is sad to ^{relate} that two or three organizations sprang up just before World War II through the efforts of the Communists and there is evidence to show that these associations are being used as a front by Communism. Unwittingly perhaps, intellectual men of my generation have been attracted to these organizations and it is this group of intellectual liberals whom we fear now. Although the evidence that these organizations are Communist-inspired has not been sufficiently substantiated still there is a great deal of suspicion amongst us that they are being used as tools in the ideological war against Communism.

Recent events seem to confirm our fears. The fight ^{against} against Communism in the Philippines has passed the military phase, for our land, sea and air forces have defeated the Communists everywhere. There are only two or three hold-out leaders in the mountains.

We shall get them too. But today the danger lies in the political phase of the Communist operations. Communists are stealthily creeping like a thief in the night into the newspaper columns, in magazines, in our government as well as in society in general. And these young intellectuals are being secretly marshalled into action perhaps without their knowledge by tried and tested Communist saboteurs.

Another danger lies in the illegal entry into our country of Chinese Communists from Hainan island, Hongkong, the Chinese mainland, and Indonesia. The Philippines consists of 7,023 islands. It is physically impossible to guard each and everyone of them. Chinese Communists disguise as traders and slowly but surely work themselves into the life and occupation of the Philippines. These Chinese Communists influence the local patriotic Chinese and even amass gold and silver which they smuggle out of the country to Communist China. This constitutes another danger.

Some weeks ago a red alert was announced in Taipei and a yellow alert in Clark field in the Philippines. We are that near to Communism. Therefore, let no one think that because of our current success in defeating Communism we are resting on our laurels. We share with the free world the hopes and fears of the present era. We believe that in this life-and-death struggle there cannot be a neutral No-Man's Land. This is a battle to the bitter end. This is a conflict between good and evil, between right and wrong, between Freedom and Communism. We have made our choice; and we shall cast our lot with all men in Asia who are not afraid to die because they are too proud to let liberty perish in our time and generation. LONG LIVE ASIA FOR FREEDOM.