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Letters to the Editor

Filipino fighting in VN & Convicts

Dear Mr. Thien:

Re your fairly-written commentary << A Good Filipino >> which appeared as the March 16, 1966 instalment of your << Life's Many Sides >> column, I am one of countless Filipinos disturbed by this << PI Convicts to Battle Viet Cong >> development. I am one of those residing in Vietnam who would very willingly give up an enjoyable career and volunteer to fight with a PI unit (if they will take me) against the suppressors of freedom, and there is no greater joy than to die in a God-led cause. Too, VC's do not scare me. But the thought of fighting side by side with criminals – social outcasts, the dregs of society – just plain gives me the creeps. And it is better to have NO IMAGE than to have a BAD IMAGE.

It is comforting to note that is just a bit of unofficial proposition – evidently just an opinion of a certain group of know-it-alls who are simply out of touch with the goings-on in Viet Nam, as most peoples in other countries have obviously been. That this opinion was voiced on the floor of Congress is a clear manifestation of true freedom and true democracy (our legacy from the U.S.A.) in the Philippines. Anyone can say anything. Anybody no matter how low or high his social or political standing is, can and is entitled to make a fool of himself (at-least-once, as Sinatra puts it) whether in a marketplace or within the august halls of Congress. And it seems to be a fad among men of renown – Fulbright, De Gaulle. Sukarno, Nkrumah, the notorious Khrushchev, to name a few – and even Bobby Kennedy. This foot in-the-mouth act is sometimes deceiving. General Billy Mitchell was court-martialed though a lot of people then thought he was just kidding them and himself. A man may be making a mistake, but we cannot always say he is wrong. In our case, however, that old fogey who is happily shooting off his mouth before a seemingly naive group of listeners is not only making a staggering mistake: he is also DOUBLY dead wrong!

So take heart, Mr. Thien. That was just another ripple in the procrastinating ocean and no whitecaps indicate a massive tidal wave. We are against even considering convoy's and we will stand shoulder to shoulder solidly oppose it, even if they propose to send these convicts with no weapons to fight the Viet Cong as the best way to kill two birds of a feather. A great percentage of our people backs President Marcos wholeheartedly and even demandingly to see the engineers and soldiers to augment our medical and pre-war teams here, and we can assure you that they will be here – on our own initiative, fed, paid, and armed by us and no other, and owing allegiance only to the Philippines and to God – an elite group worthy of mention. We are fiercely anti-communistic despite appearances and fanatically love and guard our freedom. We have fought Chinese, Spanish, Japanese – among many – who sought to enslave us and destroy us. Those who object to our sending troops here are only the weak-willed (who would just wait and see), the group (whose reasons are ride the tiger rather than get involved), the crooks and the communists (whose reasons are obvious) and a vague phantom group (whose reasons are not obvious and who do not even understand why they are objecting and what repercussions they will trigger). But you must understand that ours is still a growing nation going through a phase. At stake in Vietnam is something big - which we recognized a long time ago when we first sent our volunteer doctors here and to Laos - Long before other peoples ever thought of sending help (when the business angle came in) and start bragging that the << two >> countries << WILL W-I-N. The war in society has jolted this budding but troubled republic and more things more complicated, it is still BASICALLY on rural upliftment that all efforts terrorists. And it will be on the country folks that the Philipinos will

train their technical and medical guns on for a long time. I regret to say we cannot be more spectacular and dramatic. We depend only on our own resources to do it!

Very truly yours.

A Escobarte

P.S,

Keep it up. Yours is one column I would hate to miss reading. Whether you are knocking the wind out or praising to high Heavens the prudes or powers-that-be.