

PROGRESS AND MARTIAL LAW



President Ferdinand E. Marcos

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P R E F A C E

When I promulgated martial law eight years ago, on September 21, 1972, it was to respond to an acute need of the time. A fierce and terrifying crisis gripped the nation, and as President I was clearly obliged to rally all the resources of the country, including the people themselves, to halt the drift to disaster. I knew this could be done by harnessing the courage and patriotism of the Filipino people but it would take a supreme act of faith to accomplish this in the midst of the confusion that anarchy and violence had sown. This supreme act of faith was to exercise the constitutional authority of martial law; by means of it I risked my life and honor in exchange for the knowledge that our people had the competence to prevent disaster if only this competence could be gathered from each individual and organized by a firm hand and a resolute aim.

By choosing to exercise the authority of martial law as the answer to the crisis of the early '70's, I automatically submitted myself to the judgment of history.

Today we must ask, has martial law been successful?

Without preempting the right of the Filipino people to supply the answer, I have set out in this book to state my per-

ceptions of the conditions which must inform the answer, the conditions that preceded martial law, those that existed in the eight years of crisis government, and those that exist today. I have also added what I have gathered to be the perceptions of some responsible persons with respect to a question that must surely excite the imagination of every Filipino—what might have happened if martial law had not been proclaimed?

The scenarios set forth in this book as the situations that could have taken place after 1972 are necessarily speculative, but it must be said for them that they are in fact reasonable and intelligent assumptions, and that in composing them from the suppositions of others I have employed the same objectivity that guided me to the choice of martial law eight years ago.

It is obvious at this point that we have overcome rebellion and anarchy, that we have pulled ourselves back, some would say dramatically, from the brink of national ruin. Primarily, therefore, the succeeding pages, as they give an account of how this was done, restate the capacity of the Filipino people to confront danger with determination and valor. These are gifts which lie, it seems to me secretly, in each one. Our experience has shown only too well that we need only to draw them out and put them to work. The message that our survival conveys is that these gifts are not only sufficient, they also exceed even the requirements of enormous crisis.