

TIME FOR TAKEOFF

THE PHILIPPINES IS READY
FOR COMPETITIVE PERFORMANCE
IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC



FIDEL V. RAMOS

To: H.E. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir
Mohammad

Best Wishes / Mabuhay !!! (Longlife)

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IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

FIDEL V. RAMOS



A third collection of speeches

by the President of the Republic

of the Philippines

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Preface

THE SPEECHES in this third volume—like the first two—gather around a common theme. This time it is our country's rebirth from crisis. We Filipinos are back in business at the heart of the world's fastest-growing region. Once again we're ready to pull our weight in East Asian cooperation—and to account for ourselves in the world.

Our time for takeoff has *not* come too soon. For us to achieve self-sustaining growth is desperately urgent—not only because we lag badly in East Asia's race for development but because our patient people have endured their poverty much too long.

My Administration has focused both domestic and foreign policy on economic growth. At home we have sensitized economic policy to the well-being of the majority among us who are without the means to lead decent and useful lives. Abroad we now count our membership in ASEAN as our foremost commitment. In November I attended the first leaders' meeting of APEC—Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation—in Seattle. In Washington President Bill Clinton and I inaugurated a new partnership between our countries.

We have committed our country to the ASEAN Free Trade Area—and to its ideal of open regionalism. And we are redefining our concept of nationalism. Far too long, Filipino nationalism has been introspective and unsure of itself.

In the postwar period, we had mistakenly equated nationalism with economic self-sufficiency, and shut our doors against

foreign investment and multinational industry. Meanwhile our vigorous neighbors were measuring themselves against the best in the world.

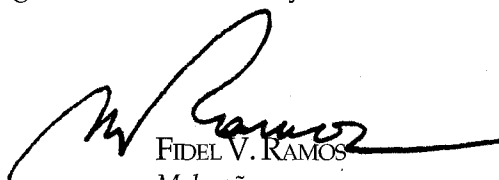
Over the past 20 months, we have painstakingly prepared the ground for takeoff. We have restored political stability. We are agreed on an economic vision for our country; and we have reached a consensus on the structural reforms to make that vision of "Philippines 2000" a reality.

Best of all, we have regained our national sense of purpose. We have arrested the decline of the national spirit which had so demoralized our people.

We have also redefined the relationship between Government and the private sector. If the State was the monkey on the back of business, now it is determined to create the climate in which individual enterprise can flourish. It sees its job as providing effective government—to establish the rule of law, and to build the infrastructure that business cannot build for itself.

We acknowledge the power of self-interest in generating development. But we also insist the pursuit of profit must be mitigated by a sense of civic responsibility. We regard private wealth as a public stewardship. We Filipinos have always accepted that people with *more* are obliged to help people with *less*—in recognition of a common humanity. This traditional moral code we shall make a principle of public policy.

The way ahead is clear. We must do what our neighbors did—modernize without giving up our cultural values; develop on our own terms. Confidently, in unity of purpose, and trusting in God's grace, let us go to meet our destiny.



FIDEL V. RAMOS
Malacañang
18 March 1994