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SESSION NO. 77

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

**FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

SESSION NO. 77
Wednesday, May 14, 2008

CALL TO ORDER

At 3:36 p.m., the Senate President, Hon. Manny Villar, called the session to order.

PRAYER

Sen. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada led the prayer, to wit:

Sandali tayong manahimik at isa-ilalim ang ating mga sarili sa kapangyarihan ng ating mapagpalang Poong Maykapal.

Ama naming mahal, muli kaming nagsusumamo sa Inyong paggabay upang sa mga araw na darating ay maisaisip namin at ng mga kapwa kong mambababatas ang kapakanan ng ating mga mahal na kababayan sa mga batas na aming iaakda.

Sa Inyong kapangyarihan at patnubay, kami ay sumasampalataya na hindi Ninyo hahayaang mapariwara ang aming bansa.

Kami Po ay umaasa na sa Inyong pamamagitan, ang lahat ng aming suliranin ay Inyong bibigyan ng kalutasan lalo na ang paghihikahos ng aming mga kapwa Pilipino.

Ito Po ay aming samo't dalangin sa Ngalan ng Inyong bugtong na Anak na si Hesukristo.

Amen.

ROLL CALL

Upon direction of the Chair, the Deputy Secretary for Legislation, Edwin B. Bellen, called the roll, to which the following senators responded:

Aquino III, B. C. S.	Lacson, P. M.
Arroyo, J. P.	Lapid, M. L. M.
Biazon, R. G.	Legarda, L.
Cayetano, A. P. C. S.	Madrigal, M. A.
Cayetano, C. P. S.	Pangilinan, F. N.
Defensor Santiago, M.	Pimentel Jr., A. Q.
Ejercito Estrada, J.	Revilla Jr., R. B.
Enrile, J. P.	Roxas, M.
Gordon, R. J.	Villar, M.
Honasan, G. B.	Zubiri, J. M. F.

With 20 senators present, the Chair declared the presence of a quorum.


Senator Escudero arrived after the roll call.

Senator Angara was on official mission.

Senator Trillanes was unable to attend the session as he is under detention.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF THE PRESENCE OF GUESTS**

At this juncture, Senator Pangilinan acknowledged the presence of barangay captains representing the *Liga ng mga Barangay* of Gasan, Marinduque, headed by Punong Barangay Rolando Tolentino.

Senate President Villar welcomed the guests to the Senate. 

APPROVAL OF THE JOURNAL

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Body dispensed with the reading of the Journal of Session No. 76 and considered it approved.

REFERENCE OF BUSINESS

The Deputy Secretary for Legislation read Proposed Senate Resolution No. 395, introduced by Senator Villar, which the Chair referred to the Committee on Rules, entitled

RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMENDING THE OUTSTANDING PHILIPPINE SOLDIERS (T.O.P.S.) OF 2008 AWARDED BY THE ROTARY CLUB OF MAKATI METRO AND THE METROBANK FOUNDATION, INC.

PROPOSED SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 395

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Body considered Proposed Senate Resolution No. 395, entitled

RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMENDING THE OUTSTANDING PHILIPPINE SOLDIERS (T.O.P.S.) OF 2008 AWARDED BY THE ROTARY CLUB OF MAKATI METRO AND THE METROBANK FOUNDATION, INC.

With the permission of the Body, only the title of the resolution was read without prejudice to the insertion of its full text into the Record of the Senate.

Thereupon, the Chair recognized Senator Aquino for his manifestation.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR AQUINO

Senator Aquino informed the Body that he had the chance to be a member of the board of judges who searched for the Ten Outstanding Philippine Soldiers (T.O.P.S.) which, to him, was both a pleasant and unpleasant experience – unpleasant in the sense that he was made painfully aware of the vast deficiencies that soldiers, sailors and other military personnel have to contend with everyday as they

address the security concerns of the State; and pleasant in the sense that, given the tremendous hardships soldiers experience, they have ingenuity, dedication, perseverance embodied in the outstanding soldiers present in the hall.

Thereupon, Senator Aquino presented to the Body the 2008 outstanding Philippine soldiers:

1. Col. Joselito E. Kakilala
- *Philippine Army, AFP*
2. SMS Reynaldo D. Garcia
- *Philippine Army, AFP*
3. SSgt. Rodel E. Bonifacio
- *Philippine Army, AFP*
4. Capt. Randy G. Bance
- *Philippine Air Force, AFP*
5. TSgt. Sandy R. Terania
- *Philippine Air Force, AFP*
6. TSgt. Jesus B. Fabian
- *Philippine Air Force, AFP*
7. Capt. Jose Renan C. Suarez
- *Philippine Navy, AFP*
8. RD1 Rosimalu D. Galgao
- *Philippine Navy, AFP*
9. CPO Edwin G. Palacios
- *Philippine Navy, AFP*
10. Capt. Ana Liza J. Morata
- *Technical Services, AFP*

In conclusion, given the country's numerous problems, Senator Aquino thanked the Lord for giving the Philippines soldiers like them who are truly outstanding in character. He urged the Body to adopt the resolution.

INQUIRY OF SENATOR PIMENTEL

Asked by Senator Pimentel whether he took pains in finding out if the awardees adhere to the principle that civilian supremacy must always be respected as a principle in the discharge of their duties, Senator Aquino replied that the soldiers were very expressive of their adherence to that principle as shown in their participation in the AFP's extra-curricular activities.

On whether the soldiers know by heart that they are not saviors of the people, Senator Aquino stated that they were forthright in illustrating all of the problems that they face; for instance, the dearth of communications equipment that precludes the necessary coordination among various elements during operations, and how they managed to overcome, if not diminished, the problems presented due to lack of the necessary equipment.

That being the case, Senator Pimentel associated himself with the tenor of the resolution and wished that soldiers would never entertain the belief that they are the saviors of the people for under the Constitution, they are the protectors of the people against foreign enemies. He observed that there are misguided elements who believe that they are the ultimate decision-makers even as to the course that the civilian government has to take.

In closing, Senator Pimentel congratulated the 10 outstanding soldiers.

REMARKS OF SENATOR BIAZON

Senator Biazon cast his vote in favor of the resolution, stressing the need to recognize soldiers who are performing their tasks well. He believed that there are still other soldiers who adhere to the principle that they are the protectors of the people and the State as clearly stated in the Constitution.

Senator Biazon stated that the country's soldiery had gone through some historical events in the country that probably may have ended up in the mind of a few that indeed, they would matter on the question of what to save, who to save and how to save.

Senator Biazon recalled that in 1986, when he was a brigade commander in Mindanao, he was asked to join the movement and when told of the purpose, he refused because he believed — and he still believes — that government should not make the mistake of giving soldiers a taste of political power because if it does, it would be difficult to get them back to barracks. He noted that for the last two decades, soldiers were given the chance to taste political power and that certain political upheavals in the country had been resolved through the involvement of some of the soldiers; as a result,

those who won in the political upheaval were put on the pedestal of heroism. He expressed hope that those events would not happen again. He said that the awardees represent the basic belief and the conviction in the minds of the soldiers that, indeed, the Philippines is a democratic country where the basic principle of civilian supremacy over the military prevails.

INQUIRY OF SENATOR ENRILE

Asked by Senator Enrile whether the military participation he was referring to was the 1986 EDSA Revolution, Senator Biazon replied in the affirmative.

Senator Enrile asked whether the military participated in political power after the establishment of the revolutionary government because to his knowledge, among those who participated, only General Ramos was made Chief of Staff and he, who was a civilian, was made the Secretary of Defense. He believed that the EDSA revolution would not have happened if not for those who went to Camp Aguinaldo to trigger a revolution. He underscored that credit should be given where it is due and history should not be distorted. He said that he is offended when the EDSA Revolution is being referred to as the “so-called EDSA Revolution” because he laid his life in that revolution.

Senator Biazon replied that the EDSA Revolution that removed the nation's leader was triggered by the participation of men in uniform, including Senator Enrile.

Senator Enrile agreed but pointed out that he and his group simply wanted to serve the country without asking for any reward from it. In fact, he said that soldiers like Senator Biazon were the ones who profited from it.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

With the permission of the Body, the Chair suspended the session.

It was 3:53 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:11 p.m., the session was resumed.

**ADOPTION OF PROPOSED
SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 395**

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, Proposed Senate Resolution No. 395 was adopted by the Body.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, the session was suspended to allow Senate President Villar to present to the awardees copies of the resolution.

It was 4:12 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION


At 4:14 p.m., the session was resumed.

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

Upon motion of Senator Pangilinan, there being no objection, the Chair declared the session adjourned until three o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, May 19, 2008.

It was 4:14 p.m.

I hereby certify to the correctness of the foregoing.


EMMA LIRIO-REYES
Secretary of the Senate
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Approved on May 19, 2008