

A Narrow Path to the Future By a Philippine Patriot and Citizen of the World

by Antonio A.S. Valdes, Chairman
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The following statement was released by Antonio “Butch” Valdes on May 15 to the Philippine people living around the world, but it is more generally addressed to all citizens of the world, since any solution to the crisis facing one nation depends absolutely on a solution to the current existential crisis facing the world as a whole.

Butch, as he is known to all, is the former Undersecretary of Education from 1998-2000. In addition to being Chairman of the Democratic Party of the Philippines (KDP), which he founded in 2018, Butch is the founder and chairman of the Philippine LaRouche Society. Butch also founded the popular movement “Save the Nation” in 2013. He has worked with the late Lyndon LaRouche and his organization since 1987.

For the past 17 years, he has also hosted a nationwide radio program on DZXL (558 KHz) every Sunday night, along with other programs during the week, which are also followed by many of the Overseas Filipino Workers living abroad on the Katipunan Channel available on Facebook and YouTube. The first section of this statement, and the last section, are universal in their subject matter and their intent. In between, he addresses several specific problems facing the Philippines. As a friend of Butch and of the Philippines, I have added explanations where necessary for those unfamiliar with the Philippines, either in square brackets or in footnotes.

—Michael Billington



Antonio “Butch” Valdes

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It’s reasonable to assume that this crisis caused by the COVID-19 will not be the last health challenge which we as mankind will have to face. The possibilities of the same coronavirus mutating to other more deadly forms are endless. Even more so, for other types of diseases which may resurface, like malaria, tuberculosis, dengue, Ebola, AIDS, and others yet unknown because of failed economies which have lost the ability to protect against these diseases through improved healthcare systems.

By now there is a general realization that what poses more as a crisis of present civilization is the economic impact on humans, threatening our ability to survive diseases compounded by a resultant increased social disorder. The world has been jolted by an event unsurpassed in history, as to magnitude and severity—jolted into a realization that life as we know it will never be the same. The



Butch Valdes visiting with Lyndon and Helga LaRouche at their home in Virginia in 1996. To Mrs. LaRouche’s right is Gail Billington.

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Health care workers in the Philippines caring for COVID-19 patients, giving the “Duterte salute.”

instinct of self-preservation has led many nations to look after themselves, closing borders, inhibiting business and agriculture, forcing lockdowns, and using their financial resources to stem social unrest from a hungry population.

Furthermore, there is a tendency to try to prove to one’s own people that their government is doing better than others, by publishing comparative but unverified statistics. The general feeling of anxiety, apprehension and distrust threatens to erupt into chaos and anarchy, forcing governments to use military means to maintain peace and order.

When the disease has wrought its damage on the world population, and has spent itself through “herd immunization” or by the discovery and distribution of a “cure-all vaccine,” governments have to consider dramatic changes in policies.

For one, there will be a necessary effort to beef-up budgets and modernize health-care, with a focus on science, education and logistics. All countries will be making dramatic changes in economic outlook, and most will be at a loss as to how to plan an efficient recovery program.

The bankruptcy of governments, hunger, disease afflicting populations and resulting anarchy will render third-world countries ungovernable unless the necessary steps are taken to stave-off disintegration.

It is reasonable to expect that all countries affected by the pandemic will have to address joblessness of

their own nationals, and provide them with those jobs which have in the past been given to foreign workers.

The Philippine Crisis

In the Philippines, we must re-think and discontinue our policy of depending on OFWs [Overseas Filipino Workers]¹ as our principal source of revenues. The 8 to 10 million OFWs who may have to be repatriated will necessarily have to be provided with employment, which requires a complete reversal of what we have been doing these past four decades.

We were transformed by previous administrations from what would have been a producer economy to a service economy, relegated to be a source of cheap labor, and

a net importer of agricultural and manufactured goods, as our governments embraced the flawed concept of globalization.

This imposition on our country by the world’s financial oligarchy, together with the manipulated floating



Presidential Photo/Karl Norman

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, in conversation with U.S. President Donald Trump, in Pasay City, Philippines, November 12, 2017.

1. Over 2.3 million Filipinos are on official government contract to work overseas in countries all over the world as nurses, caregivers, doctors, engineers, or other forms of corporate employment. About 11% of the GDP of the nation depends on the \$33 billion in remittances sent home by these OFWs and from some of the over 10 million other Filipinos who have emigrated permanently. Although the Philippine governments have promoted OFWs as heroes, in order to keep this flow of money coming in, it has created many broken families from the desperately poor people unable to sustain their families at home. Children are raised by single parents or by grandparents while their parents have to work abroad to sustain them, resulting in a myriad of social problems.



U.S. Army/Dino Bartomucci

President Ferdinand Marcos with U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, 1982. It was Shultz who orchestrated the coup against Marcos in 1986.



DoD/Helene C. Stikkel

President Joseph "Erap" Estrada at the Pentagon in 2000. Estrada was illegally forced from office in 2011.

exchange-rates, assured them of our permanent status as a debtor-nation—with no capability to invest in basic infrastructure such as power, water, mass-transport systems, telecommunication, and healthcare.

Our economists acceded to these onerous conditions and subordinated themselves to the IMF, subjecting the Filipino people to shoulder the debt service burden, asphyxiating them to a level of physical intolerance and hopelessness.

It is ironic that it had to take a pandemic of such magnitude for governments to consider a paradigm shift from the failed policies based on faulty axioms and postulates. Yet it's the threat of succeeding pandemics which may precipitate not only the enhancement of healthcare infrastructure but a fundamental change in financial and economic policies. A redirection of private sector and entrepreneurial energies into strategic agro-industrial activities is required immediately, away from the privatization of public utilities,² which has only worsened the living conditions of our people.

2. Following the 1986 coup against President Ferdinand Marcos, orchestrated by George Shultz and Paul Wolfowitz of the U.S. State Department, the eleven industrial development projects initiated by Marcos were scrapped, along with the only nuclear power plant in Southeast Asia, which had been completed but never turned on. The Philippines rapidly collapsed from being the most advanced nation in Southeast Asia to one of its most impoverished, while the oligarchical families, working with the IMF and corrupt political leadership, privatized the energy, water, and other public utilities. The result is recurring blackouts and even lack of water in Manila and other major cities, among the highest electricity and water rates in the world—even double that of the United States—and virtually no industrial investment, foreign or domestic, because of it.

It is lamentable that the current leadership, despite full justification and the uninterrupted public call for a suspension of collection of electricity and water bills paid to favored concessioners during this crisis, has chosen to ignore what is obviously the biggest burden to our people. To this late date, May 2020, we have yet to hear from the populist president reasons why he has played deaf to the clamor of his constituents.³

It is also regrettable that of all the \$8 billion infrastructure projects which the government has embarked on, none include base-load power generating projects, including the rehabilitation of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, which would incur a very affordable maximum cost of \$1 billion, and only 12 to 18 months to begin operating.⁴ This is very disturbing, and is indicative of the President being ill-advised, or being played with dila-

3. President Rodrigo Duterte, the first president since Marcos to resist imperial demands from abroad, has publicly threatened to re-nationalize the utilities if the oligarchical families who run them do not implement reforms to lower their exploitative rates. But, despite overwhelming support from the population, with an "excellent" support rating from 75% of the people in the polls, Duterte has been unable or unwilling to take the emergency measures proposed by Butch Valdes and others, to allow non-payment of energy and water bills during the COVID-19 crisis, and take measures to nationalize the utilities.

4. The Bataan nuclear plant, built by Westinghouse as the first nuclear power plant in Southeast Asia, was completed in 1985, but operations were stalled by fake environmental issues, and then mothballed entirely when Marcos was removed in the 1986 coup. The following puppet government of Corazon Aquino, paid every penny of the cost, plus penalties and interest payments for the plant, doubling the total cost to \$4.5 billion, yet it never produced a single watt of energy. Russian nuclear specialists have confirmed Butch Valdes's estimate of the costs for restoring the plant today at \$1 billion.



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The Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, completed 1985, but never turned on. Butch Valdes has led a national campaign to restore the facility and expand nuclear power development in the Philippines.



A poster demanding re-nationalization of the power and water utilities, sponsored by the KDP and other social organizations.

To many learned lawyers and constitutionalists, the subsequent governments after Estrada to this date, have and are still functioning without a properly promulgated Constitution. This is a very serious matter which the present and subsequent governments have to consider. Not even the present Supreme Court should be given the task to decide on this anomaly, because the Court itself is functioning without a valid mandate of a Constitution. But I shall not endeavor to pro-

pose a solution to this problem because it is rightfully reserved for advocates and patriots to make a collective decision on the matter.

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Let us consider that if the 1987 Constitution is also abrogated [the Constitution imposed after the coup against President Ferdinand Marcos], and it was that 1987 constitution which had effectively repealed the 1973 Constitution implemented under Marcos, which had annulled the war-time constitution under the Japanese occupation and effectively abolishes the 1935 Constitution. Then, what is left is the 1899 Constitution promulgated by our forefathers, which was never officially abrogated by any subsequent foreign-assisted puppet government.

The other option for our people is to wait for a declaration of a revolutionary government by either President Duterte or the Military brass, in whatever form they may find expedient.

Subsequently, we could promulgate a new Constitution or declare the adoption of the 1899 Constitution with the necessary amendments to conform to current political conditions. Indeed, the immediate future promises to be exciting, difficult, but doable to inspired revolutionaries.

5. A second “color revolution” was orchestrated in 2001 to bring down President Joseph Estrada, under whom Butch Valdes served as Undersecretary of Education. When Estrada refused to resign, a corrupt Supreme Court Chief Justice connived with then Vice President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, with a mob on the street, to go outside the Constitution, to simply declare Estrada to have “constructively resigned.”

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The Future Is Ours to Create

If we can continue and boldly assert our sovereignty as a nation, not beholden or dependent on any one country, nor any group which employs economic and financial means to control and determine our destiny, I am certain that a highly intelligent, and patriotic Filipino people can collectively muster the capacity and moral courage for self-determination.

This crisis which we now face provides us with a great opportunity to change the architecture of our country. It has shown us that our neglect of the means to improve our quality of life as a people and our posterity leaves us devastated, such that we long for the crisis to disappear so we can go back to “normalcy.”

Our economic advisers are trying to save our credit ratings at the expense of our people’s suffering from loss of income and jobs. Their concern is to keep our GDP within the levels which would make our foreign creditors impressed by their willingness to sacrifice human lives over credit-worthiness. To achieve this, these economists surrounding our president advise him that the immediate task at hand is “getting back to normalcy.” There can be no faster way to self-destruction of our nation than to “get back to normalcy.” This attitude is to be stagnant and makes us vulnerable to health, economic, political and social challenges the whole world is now facing.

The present policies which subjected our people to continuous deterioration of quality of life should be reversed. The ever-tightening grip of the oligarchs who have surreptitiously taken over the management and operations through privatization of all our public utilities, virtually given a free hand in raising prices of electricity and water, choking the life out of many Filipinos, is the condition which these economic advisers consider as normal.

U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt took the helm of his nation and proceeded to rebuild his country from the horrors of the great depression to become the savior-nation against the threat of global fascism. His election was as phenomenal as his inspiring leadership. He took on the oligarchs of his time, and subdued them, and built the most powerful nation on Earth, which stopped Hitler’s Germany and its allies from expanding their fascist economics throughout the world.

Let us pray that these unprecedented global crises shall not diminish our own phenomenally elected presi-

dent’s resolve and moral courage to stand up to those who mislead him for their own selfish interests. We expect him to continue to inspire the Filipino people despite the gravity of the challenges confronting his leadership.

Just as Roosevelt did battle with the oligarchs of Wall Street, and just as our national heroes fought oppression even at the expense of their own lives, Duterte must address the murderous ills of privatization of public utilities, and confront the oligarchs who have massively profited for the last three and a half decades at the expense of impoverished Filipinos.⁶



Government of the Philippines

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte.

We remind ourselves however, that the role of saving the nation will redound primarily on us its people, who willfully demand necessary changes in the promotion of the general welfare. It is up to the Filipino soldier, professional, farmer, teacher, laborer, senior citizens, factory workers, men and women and especially the young patriots, to reject the notion of condemning us to even greater suffering and hopelessness.

Furthermore, it should be noted that we do not rise against our own government, but against those oligarchs and their surrogate politicians

who aim to control it.

The narrow path towards a chance for a better future has been shown to us through this present crisis. It will be such a waste, and a renunciation of our obligation to coming generations if our own generation submits itself back to economic colonialism and oligarchic control.

I for one, despite all these impediments, local and international, amidst the threat of a collapse of the world economy and a possible World War III, have my sights on a new, genuine, Renaissance—not only for our people but for peoples of all nations. So help us God.

6. “Three and a half decades” refers to the period since the loss of sovereignty with the “color revolution” coup—yellow, in this case—against President Marcos in 1986.