

RECORD OF THE SENATE

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2001

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

OPENING OF THE SESSION

At 3:43 p.m., the President Pro Tempore, Hon. Manuel B. Villar Jr., called the session to order.

The President Pro Tempore. The 36th session of the First Regular Session of the Twelfth Congress is hereby called to order.

Let us all stand for the opening prayer to be led by Senate President Franklin M. Drilon.

After the prayer, the St. Jude College Catholic Action Choir will lead us in the singing of the national anthem. The choir will also render another song, entitled Isang Dugo, Isang Lahi.

Everybody rose for the prayer.

PRAYER

Senator Drilon. Thomas Kemp, a member of the British Parliament in the 19th century was known for his religious poems and was the creator of Kemp in Brighton, England. He wrote this poem in 1838.

As Thou Wilt O Lord
Thou knowest what is best for us;
Let this or that be done as Thou shalt please
Give what Thou wilt
Deal with me as Thou thinkest good
Set me where Thou wilt
And deal with me in all things just as Thou wilt
Behold, I am Thy servant, prepared for all things
For I desire not to live unto myself, but unto Thee!
And O, that I could do it worthily and perfect!

Amen.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Everybody remained standing for the singing of the national anthem.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

The President Pro Tempore. With the permission of the Body, the session is suspended, if there is no objection. [There was none.]

It was 3:50 p.m.

At 3:51 p.m., the session was resumed with the Senate President, Hon. Franklin M. Drilon, presiding.

The President. The session is resumed.

ROLL CALL

The Secretary will please call the roll.

The Secretary, reading:

- Senator Edgardo J. Angara Present
Senator Teresa Aquino-Oreta Present
Senator Joker P. Arroyo Present
Senator Robert Z. Barbers **
Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon Present
Senator Renato L. Compañero Cayetano Present
Senator Noli "Kabayan" L. De Castro Present
Senator Luisa "Loi" P. Ejercito Estrada Present
Senator Juan M. Flavier **
Senator Gregorio B. Honasan Present
Senator Robert S. "JAWO" Jaworski Present
Senator Panfilo M. Lacson Present
Senator Loren B. Legarda Leviste Present
Senator Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr. Present
Senator Blas F. Ople **
Senator John Henry R. Osmeña Present
Senator Sergio R. Osmeña III Present
Senator Francis N. Pangilinan Present
Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. Present
Senator Ralph G. Recto Present*
Senator Ramon B. Revilla Absent
Senator Vicente C. Sotto III Present*
Senator Manuel B. Villar Jr. Present
The President Present

The President. With 18 senators present, there is a quorum.

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President.

The President. The Majority Leader is recognized.

THE JOURNAL

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, I move that we dispense with the reading of the Journal of the 35th session, October 24, 2001, and consider it approved.

* Arrived after the roll call
** On official mission

ROLLBACK, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF DETERMINING WHETHER THERE HAS BEEN ANY VIOLATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE SAID LAW

Introduced by Senator Honasan

The President. Referred to the Committee on Energy

The Secretary. Proposed Senate Resolution No. 180, entitled

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND COMMERCE TO INQUIRE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE POSSIBILITY OF THE NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION (NAPOCOR) LOWERING ITS RATES FOR ELECTRICITY AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE LOWERING OF CRUDE OIL PRICES IN THE WORLD MARKET TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF FILIPINO CONSUMERS

Introduced by Senator Villar Jr.

The President. Referred to the Committees on Energy; and Public Services

The Majority Leader is recognized.

MOTION OF SENATOR LEGARDA LEVISTE
(Referral of S. No. 786 Secondarily to
Constitutional Amendments, Revision of
Codes and Laws Committee)

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, may I move that the bill of Senator Biazon, Senate Bill No. 786, be secondarily referred to the Committee on Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws as it was primarily referred to the Committee on National Defense.

The President. Is there any objection? [Silence] There being none, the motion is approved.

BILL ON SECOND READING
S. No. 1824—Optional ROTC Program
(Continuation)

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, I move that we resume consideration of Senate Bill No. 1824 as reported out under Committee Report No. 3.

The President. Is there any objection? [Silence] There being none, resumption of consideration of Senate Bill No. 1824 is now in order.

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, I ask that we recognize the sponsor of the measure, Sen. Renato L. Compañero Cayetano.

The President. The Chair understands that this bill is still in the period of interpellations.

Senator Legarda Leviste. It is still in the period of interpellations, Mr. President, and I move that we recognize the sponsor of the measure.

The President. Sen. Renato L. Compañero Cayetano is recognized as the principal sponsor of Senate Bill No. 1824.

Senator Legarda Leviste. For the continuation of the interpellation, Mr. President, I move that we recognize Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta.

The President. Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta is recognized.

Senator Cayetano. Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Thank you, Mr. President.

Will the distinguished gentleman yield for a few questions?

Senator Cayetano. With pleasure and honor, to the lady senator from Malabon and the Philippines and my predecessor as chairperson of the Senate Committee on Education, Arts and Culture.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Thank you, Mr. President.

After having read the proposed draft, I have made a number of observations and I would like to seek clarification.

First, there is an issue raised by many oppositors that this bill will merely optionalize military training into extinction. Is the gentleman aware of this, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, this bill will not just optionalize or make voluntary the subject of ROTC to be taken by college students.

There are alternatives in the bill, Mr. President, which, if a college student chooses not to select basic ROTC, he or she has to take one of the two alternative programs listed in the bill.

So, there is still, Mr. President, in answer to my colleague, an obligation on the part of any college student to enroll in any of these two alternatives found in the bill.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I would like to thank the gentleman for that, Mr. President.

Mr. President, on the other hand, there are also others who argue for the abolition of the military training. Is the gentleman aware of this?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President. In fact, I am one of those who proposed the complete abolition of basic ROTC, but my own personal inclination was superseded by a couple of public hearings which we held here in Metro Manila and in Cebu City, together with several proposals from almost 11 senators who proposed an optional rather than a complete abolition of the course on ROTC.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I would like to thank the gentleman again, Mr. President.

There seems to be a common concern that there is corruption within the ROTC system. Does the gentleman agree with this concern, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. And does this bill take that into account, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President. The bill took it into account in the sense that one of the reasons that brought forth to public attention the need to review the mandatory aspect of ROTC as a subject matter of college students is precisely the allegations which have been bruited about in the newspapers that corruptions and some kind of payoffs are being made by some college students to ROTC instructors, thereby instead of being able to faithfully implement the provision of R.A. No. 7077, which requires mandatory ROTC, that mandatory requirement of the subject matter on ROTC has been undermined.

So, Mr. President, the answer to my colleague's question is 'yes.' We are aware of this and this is one of the reasons many of my colleagues here have proposed an optional ROTC program.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I see. Mr. President, there is also a pervasive belief that the ROTC is a dumping ground for army rejects. Does this bill tackle that concern?

Senator Cayetano. That, Mr. President, in all sincerity, has not been discussed in the public hearing. There have been some

whispers about that—that the instructors of ROTC are dumping grounds for the not so well-liked or qualified members of the armed forces—but I would like to think that this is not so. But I do recognize that this has been talked about.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I see. I would like to thank the gentleman for that, Mr. President.

Now, does the bill empower school administrators or the school administration?

Senator Cayetano. If my colleague is speaking about the other alternative to an optional ROTC, yes, Mr. President. It has not been clearly spelled out here, but I can assure my colleague that, at the proper time, the committee will prepare an amendment which will include alternative programs other than ROTC that will be managed by educational institutions.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. And the school administrator is empowered to do so?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. All right. I would like to thank the gentleman again. Now, how will the bill ensure the safety of students who wish to take part in the optional ROTC program or even the various alternative national service programs?

Senator Cayetano. Well, those who will continue to take the ROTC program, although it would be optional, once this bill is approved...

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Yes, Mr. President.

Senator Cayetano. By the way, Mr. President, as an aside, let me inform my colleagues here, that the House, I understand, has already passed its own version of the optionalized ROTC program. The administrative management and supervision of an optionalized ROTC program will remain with the National Defense Department. But as I indicated earlier, as far as the other programs are concerned, these will be administered by the school authorities.

As to safety and security, I would imagine, Mr. President, that under this bill, an administrative supervisor will be held responsible if and when a student suffers unnecessary injury in compliance with whether it is an optionalized ROTC or a choice of one of the two alternative programs.

Now, the bill does not contain that, Mr. President. However, the Civil Code provides that the school authorities and teachers are substitute parents. And therefore, in the event that students

who may be taking any of these courses would suffer injury as a result of the negligence of the college authorities or, for that matter, even ROTC instructors, then we will file a case as far as civil case is concerned against the schools or against the ROTC instructors.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Again, I would like to thank the gentleman for that.

Now, Mr. President, will the bill protect student cadets from maltreatment during training?

Senator Cayetano. Well, Mr. President, it is not written here but, again, I would imagine that taking ROTC is simply to prepare college students in the art—in basic military training education. And therefore, suffering injuries whether organized or individually made by some members of the ROTC should be one of the concerns of the National Defense Department. It is not written in the bill as far as that is concerned.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Again, although it is not stated in the bill, the underlying rationale of the previous clause on citizens' compulsory military training is to ensure that the State will have a steady manpower resource for defense. Would the gentleman agree with me on this?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President, I agree 100 percent to that.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. But does the gentleman believe that this is a genuine concern of the State for the State, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, in fact, in the Constitution, Mr. President, all citizens are required to render military, civic or community services whenever the State may require such services to be rendered by all citizens.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Then, Mr. President, how will we reconcile this concept with the fact that military training will only be optional?

Senator Cayetano. Well, Mr. President, the rationale for making optional the ROTC program will not be contrary to the requirement that the State may require a citizen to render military service. It may well happen that a college student chooses not to take ROTC, for instance, because it would be optionalized. But, under Republic Act No. 7077, the State may call on every citizen who are between the ages of 18-35 and 36 to, I think, 50 or something, to, in fact, undergo compulsory military training in the event that such a requirement is needed by the State. So in case a college student chooses not to take basic ROTC, I wish to assure my colleague that

R.A. No. 7077 will take effect and that all citizens between the ages of 18-35 and so on and so forth, may be required to render military service.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I see. Now, Mr. President, why was the word "peacekeeping" used to describe this program? In my understanding and experience, "peacekeeping" is what foreign military forces deputized by the UN do. So, why did we use the word "peacekeeping?"

Senator Cayetano. Well, Mr. President, I want to thank my good colleague for that. It is really a word to describe a number of activities under that heading "peace-keeping" because it does not only involve, under the bill, helping out a new barangay or a municipality in maintaining peace and order but likewise it also involves such matter as helping out in disaster and calamity whenever such events occur, as well as in promoting good traffic management, et cetera. If there is a better—

Senator Aquino-Oreta. So there would be no distinction.

Senator Cayetano.—or a more descriptive word or phrase, Mr. President, I certainly would appreciate such a proposal at the proper time.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I would like to thank the gentleman again for that.

Now, I also notice that this bill only covers the Reserve Officers Training Corps or ROTC. What will happen to the Citizens Armed Training Program, the CAT, that will cover high school students, Mr. President? Will this also be optional?

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, unfortunately, my colleague is correct. It does not cover CAT, meaning, the high school. Perhaps, we can have that in another bill because the CAT program is quite different from the ROTC. The former involves high school students while the latter involves college students. I have been asked about this by a number of high school students, high school principals and superintendents and my answer is, perhaps, another bill would be more appropriate than to include it here.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I see. Again, I thank the gentleman for that. Now, as far as the alternative national service programs are concerned, I was also wondering why the concept of immersion programs were not included, Mr. President.

Senator Cayetano. As I said, Mr. President, this is just a proposal. Certainly, we will appreciate it if my colleague could propose an amendment at the proper time and have it included in any of these two alternative national service programs. We are not averse to having many possible areas where

college students would opt not to take ROTC but would nevertheless be required to take any of these alternative programs as a mandatory subject matter.

I think the more activities there are, as far as the community and the national government are concerned, will be helpful, Mr. President.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. Thank you. And lastly, Mr. President, I noticed that in Section 6, the Department of Education is still referred to as the Department of Education, Culture and Sports. I would like to inform the chairman and the Body that Republic Act No. 9155 or the Governance Law, the complete title of which is

AN ACT INSTITUTING A FRAMEWORK OF GOVERNANCE FOR BASIC EDUCATION ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY AND RENAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORTS AS THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,

has been passed by this Congress. So please make that correction that the Department of Education, Culture and Sports is now known as the Department of Education.

Senator Cayetano. I would like to thank my colleague for that. Let me just say that I am quite aware of that because I remember I had some interpellations on that now very important legislation that this committee passed under my predecessor, Senator Aquino-Oreta.

The only reason for this, Mr. President, is our Rules. The Senate Rules have yet to be amended and as far as the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture is concerned, it remains as such. Perhaps, at the proper time, we can ask the Majority Leader and the Rules Committee to change the name of the committee. That is the only explanation for that. But my colleague is 101 percent correct.

Senator Aquino-Oreta. I thank the gentleman for his time, Mr. President, and I thank him for answering the questions.

Senator Cayetano. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. The Majority Leader is recognized.

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, I move that we recognize Senator Ejercito Estrada for the continuation of the interpellations.

The President. Sen. "Loi" Ejercito Estrada is recognized.

Senator Ejercito Estrada. May the gentleman from Pateros and Philippines yield for a few questions?

Senator Cayetano. With great pleasure, Mr. President, to our colleague from San Juan, the Philippines, and the former First Lady of the land.

Senator Ejercito Estrada. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, the title of the bill reads:

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN OPTIONAL RESERVE OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS (ROTC), ESTABLISHING ALTERNATIVE NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS SUCH AS PEACEKEEPING AND CIVIC WELFARE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE IN COLLEGIATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Mr. President, I just want to clarify from the distinguished sponsor if the phrase "AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES" is necessary considering that Article VI, Section 26, of the Constitution provides: "Every bill passed by the Congress shall embrace only one subject which shall be expressed in the title thereof."

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, I would like to thank the lady senator for that comment. I guess the only reason for this is, this is some kind of a format that we have adopted in this Chamber. The phrase "FOR OTHER PURPOSES" really refers not to a subject matter alien to the main subject or title of the bill, but rather to something related and indispensable.

For instance, the phrase "FOR OTHER PURPOSES" could refer to the drafting of the implementing rules and regulations or it could refer to transitory provisions, and so on and so forth, Mr. President.

I would like to thank the lady senator for that. I wish to assure her that this particular bill follows the Constitution as she mentioned.

Senator Ejercito Estrada. Yes. Because we also have a case of central copies, but this is a vintage case. It was decided on March 12, 1920. I do not know if this was amended already.

It says and the Supreme Court ruled that "The phrase 'and for other purposes' expresses no specific purpose and import and definitely something different from that which precedes it in the title. This therefore is universally rejected as having no force or effect wherever this constitutional restriction operates." That was one of the cases discussed before.

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, I would like to thank our colleague for that. After the interpellation, I would like to have a copy of that ruling, and I would like to assure her that I will study if indeed there is a need for us to validate the point that she has raised, whether the use of the phrase "for other purposes" should be deleted.

Senator Ejercito Estrada. Thank you.

Mr. President, Section 4, paragraph 2, provides that students electing to enlist in the ROTC Program shall not be assessed or charged any fee and shall be entitled to necessary assistance and allowance.

Mr. President, may I be enlightened what possible necessary assistance and allowance are to be given to the students?

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, this particular bill is one of the babies of my cochairman, Sen. Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr. Certainly, one of the assistances that Senator Magsaysay has thought of is something like a *merienda* money, for instance. If not a *merienda* money, at least an allowance in such an amount that would help the students in undertaking this optionalized ROTC program.

With the consent of my colleague, may I ask my cochairman, Senator Magsaysay, to reply to Sen. "Loi" Estrada's question.

Senator Magsaysay. With the permission of the Senate President and our colleague, Senator Ejercito Estrada.

The President. Sen. Ramon B. Magsaysay Jr. is recognized.

Senator Magsaysay. Mr. President, this general statement shows the will of the Philippine government to give value to the time given by the young students undertaking ROTC courses. In fact, in other countries like Taiwan and even the United States, the trainees are given incentives. In the United States, ROTC trainees are given US\$30,000 credit for their college education. The advertising for ROTC during these times show that if a young man or woman gets into the ROTC program, he or she is given financial and other educational incentives.

In the case of the Philippines, we are showing our appreciation to the young people that despite the rigorous training that they are going to undergo, even if it is optional, they will be given some kind of meal allowance, if not uniform allowance.

However, we are also looking at the budget constraints of the armed forces. Its budget will be discussed starting this month for the year 2002. We are looking at the basic allowance of

at least P60 during each training day which will replicate the present subsistence allowance of the enlisted personnel of P60 per day.

But we will not end here. We will also look at the possibility that those taking ROTC can also be given some kind of vocational training like what they are doing in other countries. Once they finish these courses, they are not just mere military-oriented individuals but they also possess some productive skills and talents.

In Taiwan, the ROTC officers are given a subsistence allowance like a minimum wage while they are undertaking military training, Mr. President.

Senator Ejercito Estrada. In that case, Mr. President, may I know from the distinguished sponsor: If the students wanted to enroll in any of the alternative national service programs, are they also entitled to necessary assistance and allowance and will not be charged of any fee?

Senator Magsaysay. The way the present bill is put together, it does not include that because we are concentrating on the ROTC program. And if the other departments would like to consider that, they are free to do so. But we feel that this will further put pressure on our national budget. So we are concentrating on the ROTC program because this is the pool, the manpower reserve where the military will come from. We have to give them that kind of appreciation and acknowledgment.

Senator Ejercito Estrada. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Senator Magsaysay. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. The Majority Leader is recognized.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, I move that we suspend the session for one minute.

The President. Is there any objection? [*Silence*] There being none, the session is suspended for one minute.

It was 4:27 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:28 p.m., the session was resumed.

The President. The session is resumed. The Majority Leader is recognized.

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, I ask that we recognize Sen. John H. Osmeña for interpellation.

The President. Sen. John H. Osmeña is recognized.

Senator J. Osmeña. Thank you, Mr. President.

Will the distinguished sponsor, our colleague from Taguig, yield for a few questions?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President, with honor and privilege to my colleague from Cebu.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, this bill, quite obviously, after all these discussions here, seeks to make the training in the ROTC voluntary or, as we call it, an optional program.

Mr. President, as a preface to my questions, ROTC was originally conceived in the National Defense Act, which is Commonwealth Act No. 1, which at the time it was enacted in 1935 or 1936, was enacted with the clouds of war, so to speak, hanging over us, with what was expected to be an invasion of the Philippines by Japan. And so this was really enacted in preparation for war. Now, Mr. President, is that particular situation currently faced by our country?

Senator Cayetano. I daresay, Mr. President, that it does not at the present time or for the long time since World War II.

I agree with my colleague that the initial institution and creation of ROTC was a product of the hovering cloud of World War II at that time which, of course, we all knew not only occurred but also resulted in the destruction and death of many Filipinos. But the idea remains the same nevertheless. Meaning, the law remains as is despite the fact that my colleague is correct in pointing it out.

Senator J. Osmeña. That is precisely correct, Mr. President. The law has, unfortunately, not been amended despite the fact that in the last few years, I think we enacted Joint Resolution No. 28 and Republic Act No. 7898, which, in effect, is the latest enactment with respect to the mobilization and the strength of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Is that not correct?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President. In fact, I would say that even before 1991, which was the year Republic Act No. 7077 took effect, the late President Marcos tried to provide for some kind of an alternative although it was not spelled out very clearly, and this was contained in Presidential Decree No. 1706 in 1980, where military training is just one of the supposed duties of the citizens.

But my colleague is correct. The latest law which maintains the mandatory aspect of ROTC is contained in Republic Act No. 7077.

Senator J. Osmeña. What year was that enacted, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. Republic Act No. 7077 was enacted in 1991, and it took effect on June 27, 1991.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, as the name implies, "Reserved Officers Training Corps," this is intended to train and to create a corps of officers in reserve, because "Reserved Officers Training Corps." Is that not correct?

Senator Cayetano. Well, Mr. President, Republic Act No. 7077,—I think this is what my colleague is saying—the title here does not refer merely to reserve forces but it refers to the creation of a citizen armed force. And I will read it for the record.

Republic Act No. 7077. - An Act Providing for the Development, Administration, Organization, Training, Maintenance and Utilization of the Citizen Armed Force of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and for Other Purposes.

That is the full title of the Act, and the short title is known as "The Citizen Armed Force or Armed Forces of the Philippines Reservist Act."

Senator J. Osmeña. And this law, Mr. President, reiterates the provision of Commonwealth Act No. 1, requiring "ROTC training?"

Senator Cayetano. Yes, as far as making it mandatory under Section 38.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, ROTC, as I again said earlier, speaks, as the name implies, of training officers. Was it the intention of Republic Act No. 7077 to provide for the training of officers that the ROTC should be the source of the manpower that would be required if we were to mobilize?

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, there are two kinds of ROTC. One is the basic which all college students are required to take. These are really four semesters or two years, and these are not the source of the officer corps of the armed forces as far as the reserve is concerned. Some of them who took the basic ROTC and graduated from it may be noncommissioned officer, like staff sergeant, technical sergeant. But the source of the officer corps for the reserve force of the armed forces comes from those who will take the so-called advanced ROTC. After graduating from the

basic ROTC, they can go through the so-called advanced ROTC and that will constitute the officer corps.

Senator J. Osmeña. We will get to that, Mr. President.

So the students who take up four semesters of basic ROTC are not really being trained to be reserve officers.

Senator Cayetano. No, Mr. President. They are trained in order to ensure that if and when the country needs the assistance of its citizens, it will have a corps of citizen's army, so to speak. That is the basic underlying aspect as far as the basic ROTC is concerned.

Senator J. Osmeña. So the basic ROTC is supposedly a source for the foot soldier, if I may use that term. I do not mean to be derogatory, but that is really the rank and file of the armed forces. Is that not correct, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. Well, I would say 80 percent correct because the 20 percent—some of them—becomes what we call the noncommissioned officers—sergeants, and so on and so forth. Yes, it is correct.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, in the event of mobilization, the graduates of the basic ROTC are called to service and become enlisted men.

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. So, Mr. President, there is some unfairness in this because that means that a person who does not go to college, who goes off to work when he finishes high school or who does not even go to high school is not within the reach of the recruitment or mobilization process in the event of mobilization because he is not a basic ROTC graduate. He stands outside of that pool of manpower. Is that a correct conclusion?

Senator Cayetano. At first glance, Mr. President, I would agree. But let me just note, in reply to my good friend, that Republic Act No. 7077 also requires those aged 18 to 25 to register as citizen's soldiers. Meaning, if a person is not a college student and therefore is not taking mandatory ROTC, it does not mean to say that he could not be called upon to serve or to undertake some military training.

The main aspect of Republic Act No. 7077 is precisely to require those who are between the ages of 18 and 25 to register in different places, in their barangays. And these so-called registrants are supposed, after an examination of their health, physical, et cetera, to undergo compulsory training. Of course, the only problem here is,—my colleague is correct—

we do not have any appropriation for compulsory training of these out-of-school youth who do not go to college. They do not only register but let alone be required to undergo compulsory military training, unlike a college student.

So in that case, as I said, at first glance, there seems to be unequal treatment.

Senator J. Osmeña. I do not know if the AFP does indeed have a register of the so-called out-of-school youth as required by law, the citizen's soldier, as the sponsor said, 18 to 25. May I inquire from the sponsor if there is such a registry?

Senator Cayetano. I understand that the Armed Forces of the Philippines does not have, as the gentleman said, statistical data on the registered number of out-of-school youths between the ages of 18 and 25 who are required to register and undergo compulsory military training, although the law speaks that this particular requirement has to be undertaken in consultation with the Local Civil Registrar.

The gentleman is correct, Mr. President, they do not have, I understand, a complete listing of how many out-of-school youths whose ages are between 18 and 25, as far as Republic Act No. 7077 is concerned.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, would the committee be able to tell this representation how many persons in this country, how many males, or do we discriminate or just everybody between 18 and 35, or do the females also have to register?

Senator Cayetano. Republic Act No. 7077 does not discriminate. It speaks of all citizens, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. So how many citizens between the ages of 18 and 35 are in the country today? In a country of 75 million people, how many are between the ages of 18 and 35?

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, I must confess that if the gentleman can guess, his guess is just as good as mine. I really do not know. The only thing I know, from what I read in the papers, is that I think females already outnumber male Filipinos at this point in time.

Senator J. Osmeña. Nevertheless, Mr. President,—because I am not really trying to say how many more males or females there are—I just want to identify the universe from which we could recruit our enlisted persons in the event of mobilization.

Senator Cayetano. I regret, Mr. President, that I really have no idea whatsoever.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, statistically we are told that 66 percent of the population of about 50 million is under the age of 35. So even if we say that only one-third of that is between 18 and 35, for the sake of argument, let us say 20 million people are under the age of 35, this would be the universe from which we could recruit the enlisted men in the event of mobilization.

Senator Cayetano. Yes, between the ages of 18 and 25, not 35.

Senator J. Osmeña. Anyway, that could be smaller, Mr. President.

How many students every year have been taking basic ROTC?

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Senator Cayetano. I move that we suspend the session for one minute, Mr. President.

The President. The session is suspended, if there is no objection. *[There was none.]*

It was 4:43 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:44 p.m., the session was resumed.

The President. The session is resumed. Senator Cayetano is recognized.

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, in reply to the question of my colleague as to how many enrollees there are in mandatory ROTC at the present time, there is an average of about 150,000 every school year.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

I move for another one-minute suspension of the session, Mr. President.

The President. The session is suspended, if there is no objection. *[There was none.]*

It was 4:44 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 4:45 p.m., the session was resumed.

The President. The session is resumed.

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, with the permission of my colleague, I would like to rectify this information earlier passed on to him.

The enrollees every year, since 1997 to the year 2001-2002, for the record, I would read it: For the school year 1997-1998, 270,000.

Senator J. Osmeña. Are these enrollees, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. Enrollees, yes. First year.

Senator J. Osmeña. In ROTC?

Senator Cayetano. ROTC. For the school year. I am just giving the round figures, Mr. President, for convenience. For 1998-1999 school year, 272,000; for the school year 1999-2000, 300,000; for the school year 2000-2001, 313,000; and for this school year 2001-2002, 262,000. So, for this period of six school years, the enrollees numbered to 1,420,000, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. That is the first year. How about the second year?

Senator Cayetano. Basically, this first year goes through the second-year program of ROTC except if they defer or did not enroll.

Perhaps, Mr. President, what my good colleague would like to find out is how many graduates there are of the basic courses for every year, which means four semesters. With the permission of my colleague, for the same number of...for, let us say, 1996-1997 school year, the graduates for basic ROTC, 116,000; for 1997-1998 school year, 108,000. As I said, these are round figures, Mr. President. For the school year 1998-1999, 105,000; for the school year 1999-2000, 132,000; for the school year 2000-2001, 132,000. That is the figure of those who graduated from basic ROTC.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, from the first set of figures that the gentleman gave us, according to DepEd, there are 2.3 million enrollees in our colleges in this country. For the first year, there are 700,000 enrollees. If only 262,000 have been in the first-year program, we are seeing that less than half or about 40 percent of those who enrolled are really enrolled in the ROTC program. If we assume that 50 percent are females, then only 40 percent of the number of students enrolled and the other 10 percent which are also males do not enroll. So, there is an evader body of about—

Senator Cayetano. There is, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. —one out of five is an evader in the ROTC program.

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, that may well be so but let me also interject this particular information. At present, and of course even if we optionalize, the taking of ROTC is a mandatory requirement for graduation. That is why a number of college students who have passed the academic courses have not graduated simply because they have not taken ROTC. Either they have not enrolled or, as my good friend says, they are what they call "exempted" or "evaders."

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, that is a good bit of information. Maybe, we should incorporate in the period of amendments here an amnesty section wherein all the evaders are given amnesty so that we waive the requirement heretofore and they can graduate. But at the proper time, I will introduce the amnesty provision.

But proceeding with this matter, Mr. President.

Going back to the universe, Mr. President, we were saying earlier that there are about 20 million Filipinos who could be mobilized at any given time in the event and we need to mobilize enlisted men.

Senator Cayetano. That is correct, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, under Republic Act No. 7877?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, 7077.

Senator J. Osmeña. No, the other one, Mr. President. In the interpellation of Senator Biazon, he elicited information from the distinguished gentleman which pointed out that in the event of the need for mobilization—since we have a standing army of 100,000—we would need to mobilize about 400,000.

Senator Cayetano. Yes. That is Republic Act No. 7898 known as the AFP Modernization Act, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. So in the event of mobilization, Mr. President, we would have to mobilize 400,000 enlisted men and officers. This was the gentleman's answer to Senator Biazon.

Senator Cayetano. That is right, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. And according to the distinguished senator, Mr. President, of this 400,000, about 22,000 would be officers.

Senator Cayetano. Ten percent, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. I have the record. I was just reading it before I stood up, Mr. President. But then, we could only...

Senator Cayetano. I think I must have mentioned that maybe based on a particular year, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. Anyway, Mr. President, 10% of the 400,000 have to be officers.

Senator Cayetano. Yes. That is the requirement.

Senator J. Osmeña. So of the 400,000, we take away 40,000, so 360,000. So 360,000 have to be enlisted men, Mr. President.

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. And the 360,000, Mr. President, can be mobilized out of the pool of 20 million Filipinos, Mr. President.

Senator Cayetano. Well, yes. That is supposed to be the case, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. And they do not have to have any ROTC training, Mr. President, to be mobilized?

Senator Cayetano. No. They do not have to if we follow the mandate of Republic Act No. 7077. But as we all know now, since ROTC is mandatory, they will have to be included in the mobilization.

Senator J. Osmeña. No, Mr. President. What I am saying is that when the time comes to mobilize, if we have to mobilize 360,000 bodies, we do not have to mobilize ROTC basic graduates. We can mobilize 360,000 from the entire universe of 20 million.

Senator Cayetano. Yes, definitely, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. So in effect, Mr. President, that pool of bodies that would have to be mobilized in the event that we need to put together an army of 360,000 could be mobilized from those that are totally untrained—who did not have to undergo ROTC.

Senator Cayetano. They are supposed to be trained. But as I mentioned earlier, they are not being trained simply because there is no appropriation for that. So the distinguished gentleman is correct, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. So, therefore, Mr. President, having no basic ROTC program will not in anyway impair the ability of our government to mobilize 360,000 bodies in the event of an emergency.

Senator Cayetano. I think it would in a manner that having an optionalized ROTC, we already have a corps that has undertaken some basic courses in military training. But if, let us say, tomorrow, we are involved in a possible World War III, we could certainly mobilize the citizen army consisting of ages 18 to 25 and get all these 360,000 men and women but they are completely untrained, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, if I were somebody in that bracket and such a mobilization takes place and the mobilization simply limits itself to those who took up ROTC, I might question that mobilization under the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution. We are biased towards somebody who was compelled to take ROTC when everybody should be liable or could be called to mobilization.

Senator Cayetano. I agree with that, Mr. President, just like the former requirement in the United States about compulsory draft of citizen's army.

Mr. President, I agree with my colleague that under Republic Act No. 7077, we can really get all the citizen army that we need in the event that such a need arises although they are untrained. But as of now, as I said, it will be a combination of ROTC basic graduates and also coming from those who are untrained between ages 18 and 25.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, having, shall we say, established that which is the basic thrust of my questioning, may I now focus on the cost of the so-called basic ROTC.

Do the young students pay a tuition to the school for taking basic ROTC, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, they do, Mr. President. The information we got from CHED... The formula that I understand from the Commission on Higher Education is that the ROTC tuition fee is 50 percent less than the academic unit charged for tuition fee. For instance, if an academic unit, say, in X school is P300 then ROTC would only represent 50 percent meaning P150 per unit.

Specifically, here are the charges now for ROTC. The present unit per semester for ROTC, Mr. President, is 1.5 units per semester. So for four semesters, we are looking at six units. In De la Salle University, it charges P257.50 per unit; San Beda College charges P620 per unit; PATTS Aeronautics charges P350 per unit; Mapua Institute of Technology charges P230 per unit; MLQU charges P300 per unit. This is also basically the information we got during the public hearings that I mentioned earlier that there is an average of anywhere from P300 to P1,000 per unit depending on the school. So they do pay.

Senator J. Osmeña. Is it per unit of ROTC or per unit of academic? Because the distinguished gentleman said the cost of the ROTC unit is 50 percent of the cost of the academic unit.

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. So when the distinguished gentleman said P300 to P1,000, is it P300 to P1,000 per academic unit or per ROTC unit?

Senator Cayetano. It is per ROTC unit.

Senator J. Osmeña. I am glad to hear, Mr. President, that the rich boys are paying more money. *[Laughter]*

Now, Mr. President, let us assume, let us take the lowest figure of P300 per unit.

Senator Cayetano. It is P230, Mr. President, Mapua Institute of Technology.

Senator J. Osmeña. Or P230, Mr. President. Just to round it off and make it easy, P250 per unit, six units per body. So that is P1,500 for two years per student.

Senator Cayetano. That is right, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. And the distinguished gentleman said, Mr. President, that... I do not know, my notes are all over this folder—that there are 132,000 students in the ROTC program now.

Senator Cayetano. No. More than that, Mr. President. Those are the graduates. There is an average of 230,000 students.

Senator J. Osmeña. All right, 230,000. Mr. President. So 230,000—this is granting to be greater than I thought—times P1,500 is about P350 million for the whole corps of 230,000 students that graduate every year.

Senator Cayetano. That is right, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. According to a fellow engineer, Mr. President, because the gentleman is a lawyer, it is unfair to ask him about a mathematical problem.

Senator Cayetano. We will ask the engineer, Mr. President, my cochairman, Senator Magsaysay.

Senator J. Osmeña. My fellow engineer, Senator Magsaysay, Mr. President, says that it is P345 million.

Mr. President, I think it is an understatement to say that this is a vast waste of resources. The amount of P345 million is the cost of the ROTC program for two years that is being spent, when actually this is not needed to mobilize a reserve army because, in the gentleman's answer earlier, he was able to establish that he has a pool of 20 million bodies from which we can get an army. They do not have to be ROTC graduates. So, this P345 million waste going down the drain every year, Mr. President.

Senator Cayetano. I can now sense with clarity, Mr. President, where my colleague is going. But let me just say, in anticipation of where he is going, that that is precisely the reason I earlier mentioned the fact that I was for the entire abolition of the ROTC program, but most of our colleagues here have opted for an optionalized ROTC program and I think there is a reason for that.

There are students, whether we like it or not, who just want to take ROTC. They want to be involved and to be trained in the military aspect of their education.

But my colleague is correct. With that money, it is something that we can probably minimize, if not get rid of.

Senator J. Osmeña. That is why, Mr. President, I even signed the committee report. I said I am for abolition because I think that this is a huge expense that is totally unnecessary.

Mr. President, I support the project or the proposal that we train officers and therefore there should be a reserve officers training corps not just—do not call them advanced—because this is now optional. That means 22,000 persons every year should go through this training program and let the government support this. Let us pay for their tuition fees. Let us pay for the cost. I did not even go into the cost of the uniforms. We did not go into the lost manpower. I calculated the manpower hours to be 130,000 hours per year.

Let us not go into the manpower hours lost, Mr. President. Let us have a college-based corps of training officers who are college students who want to spend their summers in attaining a degree of military proficiency which will make them qualified to become officers in times of mobilization. And let us mobilize the rest of the 360,000 from the rest of the citizenry who do not need to be trained, Mr. President. Does the gentleman not think that this would be a more, shall we say, intelligent or a more progressive manner?

Senator Cayetano. As I said earlier, Mr. President, my proposed bill is for complete abolition which is in tandem with my colleagues' idea. But I think we ought to give also an opportunity to some college students who may really want to undertake

military training and try to minimize the cost to the students of this military training.

Under the law, Mr. President, Section 42 of R.A. No. 7077, the appropriations for advanced ROTC—meaning the officer corps—shall be provided in the annual appropriations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Unfortunately, I am not quite sure. My colleague here is more familiar with that aspect of the budget, particularly my cochairman here who is now the chairman of the National Defense Committee. But the law only provides appropriations for advanced ROTC.

As I said earlier, Mr. President, I see the point in the complete abolition of the ROTC Program but I cannot help but also express here the desire of a number of school administrators who would rather see an optional ROTC program. They sensed that some of their students would prefer to have some kind of military training. And I think the reason for that is, in the event of mobilization, these students, who would opt to take an optionalized ROTC program, assuming this bill becomes a law, do not have to go through that summary six-month training program in order to be citizen-soldiers, so to speak. So that is the primary reason this bill is now proposing not an abolition but an optionalized ROTC program.

Senator J. Osmeña. Now, Mr. President, when we say "optionalized," as the word connotes, is it not compulsory?

Senator Cayetano. It is not, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. So if a young man or a person—so that we do not have a gender bias—wishes to have that training and paid the tuition for the training, well, that is his right. He can do whatever he wants...He can have computer training. Women usually have cooking school training. They can have ROTC training. But it should not be compulsory. Is that what the gentleman means by "optional," just for the record, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. For the record, as a subject, for purposes of graduation, ROTC will be voluntary. Meaning, one may or may not take ROTC. But if one will not take ROTC, then he has to take one of the two alternative national service programs.

Senator J. Osmeña. We will get to that, Mr. President.

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President. So that is what I meant, or rather that is what this bill means.

Senator J. Osmeña. We will get to the peacekeeping force for Afghanistan, Mr. President. *[Laughter]*

Senator Cayetano. Yes. That will be the case if a student

opts not to take ROTC. It will be his choice because ROTC is voluntary.

Senator J. Osmeña. So, therefore, Mr. President, an educational institution will have an ROTC program. A student can enroll in the basic course or a student, after enrolling in the basic course, can go further and enroll in the advanced course.

Senator Cayetano. That is correct, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. But, from the point of view of the government and national security, we need a corps of 40,000 officers or 40,000 bodies who can qualify as officers in the event of mobilization.

Senator Cayetano. That is right.

Senator J. Osmeña. So the next logical step, Mr. President, is that we should compensate. We should pay these people for going and training as advanced ROTC so that they will be ready to serve in the event that there is mobilization. And they have to sign a contract that if they will be mobilized, they will get free training, but we will require them to serve as officers if there is a mobilization.

Senator Cayetano. Well, my colleague here is correct. As I mentioned under Section 42, the funding for the advanced ROTC should really be shouldered by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and should be included in its annual budget. But, my colleague here, my cochairman...

Senator J. Osmeña. I will not abandon the gentleman here.

Senator Cayetano. But I doubt very much, Mr. President, that in the recent past and presently, we do not foresee a situation where our budget can shoulder the cost of advanced ROTC.

Senator J. Osmeña. Well, following the mathematical calculations that are in the records during the interpellation of Senator Biazon, since the age gap is 18 to 35 or 18 to 25...

Senator Cayetano. No, the "18 to 35" is the reserve force. But those who are required to register are between the ages of 18 to 25.

Senator J. Osmeña. So, those between the ages of 18 to 35 are the reserve force and they are the 18-year-olds because that is what the records show—

Senator Cayetano. The 18-year-olds, yes.

Senator J. Osmeña.—in the interpellation of Senator Biazon.

So, the gentleman's 40,000 bodies who are the officers that we needed in the event that we mobilize a reserve army of 400,000 should be divided by 18?

Senator Cayetano. By 18?

Senator J. Osmeña. Yes, so that we can arrive at the number of officers that we have to graduate from the advanced ROTC every year?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, that is right. That is correct.

Senator J. Osmeña. So 40,000 divided by 18 is about 2,200 per year that we have to graduate, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, more or less, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. I do not know if we can get a cost estimate from the DND.

Senator Cayetano. Well, we have some staff here.

Senator J. Osmeña. But on top of their heads, I do not know. Whatever the numbers may be, let us say, P2,000 or P3,000 per body, that is 2,000 times 2,000 is about P6 million to P8 million. We can set that aside, Mr. President, from the budget of the Department of National Defense. We will just reduce the intelligence funds of the secretary of National Defense. We can put a special provision for advanced ROTC scholarship.

Senator Cayetano. Well, that sounds great, Mr. President. I am sure the students who will take advanced ROTC will only be pleased to hear that.

Senator J. Osmeña. With the gentleman's support, we will try to incorporate that in our budget, Mr. President. We will take P8 million from the liaison officer of the DND sitting in the gallery, my dear friend, [*Laughter*]. That is P8,000,000 less that he can spend for the "Reyes for President Movement." Levity aside, I am serious.

Anyway, Mr. President, to move, that is something that we would like to see. I think, during the period of amendments we will introduce a provision that would provide for scholarship for the training of reserve officers for the advanced course. If they want to take the basic course, let them pay for it. But then if they move on to the advanced course, they can get the scholarship, Mr. President.

Senator Cayetano. Yes. In fact, Mr. President, that is the very letter of the law.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, let us now move on to the peacekeeping force.

Now, this peacekeeping force connotes service abroad in very, very turbulent situations, Mr. President. I think, somebody raised an objection here. I think Senator Aquino-Oreta who...

Senator Cayetano. Yes. Well, not so much an objection but rather a comment on why it was used because it has an international meaning.

Senator J. Osmeña. So, what the gentleman meant to say here, if I may read it, it says: "...a training module designed to enhance the maintenance of local peace and order; promote public safety; traffic management; disaster preparedness, assistance in relief and rescue operations during calamities and disasters; the prevention of drug abuse...."

Mr. President, I think this is a very laudable program. Will this be now part of the curriculum of a college student?

Senator Cayetano. Well, it would be, Mr. President. Because as proposed, peacekeeping is one of the two alternative national service programs. Therefore, for the sake of the interpellations, any college or university covered by this bill may have a subject on peacekeeping, something like that, which will encompass any of the activities mentioned by...

Senator J. Osmeña. We will try to find a substitute designation for this program, Mr. President.

Senator Cayetano. Well, we will only be too pleased, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. Because of the public perception of the word "peacekeeping," Mr. President. In any case, it should be a program that will train people to be capable of undertaking all these public safety-related activities.

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President. And I would like to emphasize the word "local." It has to be their barangay or the city where they reside.

Senator J. Osmeña. Does the gentleman mean that one will be trained as a *tanod* here, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. Well, why not, Mr. President? The gentleman is right because a *tanod* is a voluntary group of barangay peacekeeping force.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, how many hours will they spend? Because now in the ROTC program, they drill for 18 weeks

per semester times 236 weeks, four hours a week. I think they drill from 8:00 to 12:00. So 36 times four, that is 144 hours of drill per college year. How much time will they spend now in training for this?

Senator Cayetano. As a matter of principle, Mr. President, we would like to keep uniform the number of hours spent for, let us say, an optional ROTC undertaken by a student and also the same number of hours that a student may take in one of these alternative programs which, for lack of better term, we call presently a "peacekeeping program."

In other words, if, let us say, we maintain a 1.5 per semester unit of optionalized ROTC and the students train for—once a week for how many hours? All right, 54 to 60 hours per semester according to the staff we have here.

Senator J. Osmeña. How many hours per semester?

Senator Cayetano. Fifty-four to 60 hours per semester of military training.

Senator J. Osmeña. How many weeks are there in a semester? Eighteen weeks.

Senator Cayetano. Fifteen weeks per semester.

Senator J. Osmeña. How many hours of training then? They start at 8:00 in the morning. Four hours.

Senator Cayetano. Four hours, yes.

Senator J. Osmeña. So 60 hours per semester.

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. So 120 hours per year.

Senator Cayetano. Yes. So we would like to equalize that to make it uniform for the alternative service program. We do not want to discriminate against, Mr. President.

Senator J. Osmeña. And they will also pay, Mr. President, for...

Senator Cayetano. Well, Mr. President, yes, it will be a subject in the colleges and universities and therefore there will be tuition fee. But I am now going ahead of myself here. As we prepare for committee amendments, we are looking at decreasing the amount presently being collected for basic ROTC as well as the amount that may be charged as basic national service program as an alternative method to be taken by

college students. Because right now even with the amount I mentioned earlier to my colleague here, we still consider that quite burdensome on college students, most of whom, as we know, are in the poverty level as far as their families are concerned. So there will be tuition fees.

Senator J. Osmeña. Mr. President, we have programs in our budget such as SPES which is the summer training program for students wherein we underwrite 60 percent of the wages of students who find employment in a private firm and there is a considerable amount appropriated for that. We may again be able to find ways, despite our meager resources, to appropriate for this particular expenditure because, after all, there is a public interest component in training persons to be qualified in public safety programs.

Senator Cayetano. That is right, Mr. President. As far as the committee is concerned, if we can do away with tuition fees for optionalized basic ROTC and for any of the two alternative national service programs, the committee will certainly be very happy because...

Senator J. Osmeña. I will reserve that amendment also, Mr. President.

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President. We will certainly be...

Senator J. Osmeña. We will reject anyone's suggestion that comes forth. [Laughter]

Levity aside, Mr. President, the Civic Welfare and/or Community Service Program refers to the instruction component designed to encourage the youth to contribute to the improvement of the general welfare and the quality of life for the local community such as the environment, educational programs for out-of-school youths, cleaning up of designated areas, tree planting. Again, this is something that a curricula would have to be designed because if someone volunteers for civic welfare for two years, there must be some form of instruction and there have to be instructional materials prepared for this program.

Senator Cayetano. Yes. That is right, Mr. President. That is why this bill would require an adoption of implementing rules. Again, I will go ahead of myself here. As a result of the many interpellations in the past, as well as the information and comments we are getting from our colleague now, we are looking at a situation where the non-ROTC alternative service program will be managed by the different schools and universities. They will have to provide a module and design a plan, program or curriculum, as our colleague mentioned, with the assistance, of course, of CHED, the Department of Education, the DILG, the DENR, and so on and so forth.

In fact, in both alternative service programs, there will be some kind of a lesson plan designed to ensure that this is undertaken and that the students will not only be able to learn from it but the public as well. Meaning, the local government and the public in general will benefit from it. The bill envisaged that as part of the program.

Senator J. Osmeña. For all intents and purposes, Mr. President, this is the end of the ROTC program because I really feel that getting 22,000 persons to train will not be difficult in a universe of, say, 300,000 students every year. That is about less than 10 percent. But by and large, I think the vast majority of the student body will opt for the alternative avenues of national service other than the military service.

Mr. President, I thank the distinguished gentleman for his time and for the very responsive answers to the questions of this representation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Cayetano. Thank you, Mr. President, and I also thank Senator Osmeña.

The President. The Majority Leader is recognized.

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, for the continuation of the interpellation, I ask that Sen. Manuel B. Villar Jr. be recognized.

The President. Sen. Manuel B. Villar Jr. is recognized.

Senator Villar. Mr. President, will the gentleman and my good friend, Senator Cayetano, yield for a few questions?

Senator Cayetano. With privilege and honor, Mr. President, to my *kababayan* from Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, the Philippines, and the Senate President Pro Tempore.

Senator Villar. Mr. President, I was just bothered by the final statement made by Sen. John Osmeña that "for all intents and purposes, this is the end of the ROTC program." All our lives, we have always assumed that the ROTC program is a program that is a must; that it has to be taken seriously to prepare us to defend our country in case of emergency; that it will make us better citizens; and for us to know the fundamentals of military life. Now, we have a proposal to make it optional, and suddenly a lot of people are questioning the wisdom of ROTC. I could see that most of the students prefer this abolished or made optional.

I was just curious, Mr. President. What are the practices in other countries? Are we the only country that has a program like this?

Senator Cayetano. As the program is now being undertaken, Mr. President,—and I hope my good colleague here will understand me just for the record—the ROTC now is a mandatory subject.

I know for a fact that one of the countries in the world that require their young men and women to undergo military training is Israel. The United States, about a number of years ago, already lifted the so-called compulsory draft; it is no longer mandatory. I think Singapore is also one of the countries in our Asean region that require some kind of mandatory military training.

I think overall, there are more countries around the world that have optional or voluntary military training for college students rather than compulsory.

Senator Villar. So, Mr. President, can we now say that the trend is really towards making training like this optional?

Senator Cayetano. Well, yes. It is not only the trend, Mr. President. It has been a long-standing practice in many countries around the world.

Senator Villar. Would the September 11 World Trade Center attacks of some terrorists not change this position?

Senator Cayetano. I doubt, Mr. President. If we refer to our bill now making optionalized ROTC a voluntary program, or for that matter, countries that are now in coalition with the United States in fighting terrorism, I doubt very much, Mr. President. Because from a layman's point of view, fighting terrorism is different from fighting conventional warfare. I do not think any compulsory ROTC program will equip a college student with the requirement of fighting modern terroristic attacks particularly what most of us saw on September 11 via television, and what is now being reported on and off over the radio and television with respect to other aspects of terrorism, for instance, the use of biochemical terroristic acts, and so on and so forth.

So, I doubt very much, Mr. President, that as a result of the September 11 attack on the United States, these countries will have optional military training or will opt for mandatory military training for their college students.

Senator Villar. Would it not be logical, Mr. President, to change the nature of the ROTC training to one of being prepared for these possibilities, like a nuclear war or a chemical war?

Senator Cayetano. Well, yes, Mr. President. I quite agree. In fact, I think that is the reason for the great demand for the abolition or for making ROTC optional is that the program has become anachronistic. It is out of tune, so to speak, precisely because of

the present requirements. But if we have an optionalized ROTC once this bill is approved into a law, I agree with my colleague that perhaps the Department of National Defense, which will undertake the administrative supervision of an optional ROTC, should look and review and examine whether simple military training, marching, carrying of arms, so on and so forth, have to be abolished and instead look into ways of combating non-conventional war such as terrorism.

Senator Villar. I was just thinking that, yes, the September 11 incident was a terroristic attack. But America has already changed it to one of a conventional warfare, maybe high tech but still conventional, because it is attacking Afghanistan.

And we know that one of the basic assumptions, as mentioned by our President, that we have now in foreign policy is the fact that there are three powers now in Asia. We have Japan, China and the United States. And all of these things that are developing around us, are we not making a wrong answer or response to all of these changes around us, or I would say a retrogressive step?

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, if the comment of my friend has something to do with making ROTC optional, I would say, with due respect, no. Because, as I earlier mentioned to Sen. John H. Osmeña, even making ROTC optional would also invite a number of college students to enroll, particularly if and when the Department of National Defense would undertake a review, an overhaul of the kind of military training that a college student is subjected to or is trained.

Because even if we have a different kind of war now, Mr. President,—although it is a war in the sense that it involves a number of countries—the war now against terrorism, et cetera, I think even a Third World War would probably require less bodies, I mean, ground forces than originally in the Second World War or in the First World War.

So what probably my good colleague here is saying is that, if indeed we make ROTC optional, are we going to lose the ground forces that may be needed as the component of the high tech defense that we may need also in the process?

My reply to that, Mr. President, is no. As I said earlier, I believe that a number of students will still take ROTC, especially if we make it less burdensome, make it free, ensure that the Department of National Defense will provide more modern and up-to-date military training for the college students, and also give them an opportunity to even go to the advanced ROTC course if, again, we can make this free.

So I think, Mr. President, we will not lose out as far as the

concern of my colleague is concerned, if and when we need these bodies in time of war.

Senator Villar. Just to amplify that concern. It is not so much of the concern that we will lose soldiers but it is more of the concern that we might be losing an opportunity to prepare our nation for this kind of warfare, and that maybe we could in fact use the ROTC to better prepare us for this contingency, for this possibility of, let us say, chemical warfare. By changing the nature of the training, maybe we could in fact use an infrastructure that is already available to us, but unfortunately is unavailable to many other countries.

So I am afraid that we might be losing this golden opportunity to prepare our people for this kind of warfare by abolishing the infrastructure that can conceivably prepare our people in the shortest possible time in case of contingency.

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, certainly, this bill does not refer to complete abolition of the ROTC program, although my colleague and I, of course, heard the comment of Sen. John Osmeña about the coming demise of this program. But I do believe that with the citizen's army under Republic Act No. 7077 where, as I said, we can mobilize individuals anywhere from the age of 18 to 25, then we have also the Philippine Military Academy and the other sources of personnel and officers for the armed forces, plus the ROTC, I do not think we will lose out.

Let me just also add that while we make ROTC optional and also provide this alternative national service program, I would like to call attention, as far as the record is concerned, that part of fighting the modern war now is to prepare our citizens for rescue relief, for firefighting, for instance, and civil defense activities. This is something that even if one is not enrolled in ROTC, this can still be part of his alternative service program.

So I wish to allay the fear of my colleague here that the demise of the ROTC program will certainly not occur, although we may have less college students who may eventually enroll because of the other alternative program. But even the alternative program, as I said, would provide some kind of method and means by which we can fight this modern war.

Senator Villar. I will no longer pursue this point, but before I leave this point, may I just suggest to our advisers—the members of the Defense Department—that perhaps we should rethink these alternatives and we should not let go of this infrastructure just in case. We might be already there. And while other countries might be at this point considering the possibility of having something like the ROTC to prepare them, we are, on the other hand, leaving the ROTC program.

But let me just go to the second point—the foreign policy. We know that our military right now is ill-equipped. We do not have equipment. I do not think we can go to war with any country.

But right now, we have three nations that could affect our security, as I mentioned earlier, and these are Japan, China and United States. These three countries are looking at each other, and we are the inevitable players. We have in fact the Spratlys problem. China has consistently been ignoring our call for neutrality in the Spratlys. China simply continued to put up military structures in complete disregard of the complaints lodged by our country. And so the military structures are continuously being built.

We are complaining, we are going there on a State visit and having our photo sessions with them, but meanwhile, they continue building their military structures in the Spratlys. They know that we cannot afford to have war with them. They know that we cannot win; they know that we cannot prevent them from putting up military structures in Spratly Islands.

I was just thinking that, at the very least, could this ROTC program not be an advantage, or at least, they would have the impression that if they analyze the Filipinos, how prepared are they militarily when they are not equipped, but they have this ROTC program that prepares all their citizens for combat training? Although, of course, I realize that there are a lot of shortcomings of the ROTC training.

But would this not at least constitute a deterrent so that at least China will not continue doing what it is doing now in the Spratlys?

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, I am glad that my good friend and colleague here mentioned about foreign policy vis-a-vis certain aspects, particularly the Spratly Islands of which we have dispute not only with China but also with the different countries around the area. My friend here mentioned that one of the methods—which to me should really be more effective than military confrontation—is diplomacy. But my colleague is also correct. This has been brought pretty hard on our friends from China and other countries that are also claiming this area as we do, despite our better and clearer ownership of these islands.

But to go to war, Mr. President, by military confrontation on these areas simply because we maintain ROTC, as we have it now as a mandatory aspect of graduation, I doubt if it will in any way strengthen our position vis-a-vis what China and the other countries are doing. For one, our basic ROTC as presently being undertaken as a mandatory subject for graduation, merely refers to purely military training on the ground. There are very few air force, navy, for that matter, that are involved. Most of them are

army, if I am not mistaken. I think as far as any military confrontation that may occur, whether we like it or not,—if it does occur—what we probably need are not only more qualified, more competent air force officials but most of all, of course, modern airplanes and aircraft, and the same goes for the navy as well.

So, with due respect to my colleague, Mr. President, I think optionalizing ROTC will not in any way deter the aggressiveness of certain friends of ours from the other side of the ocean, so to speak, to claim a part of the Spratly Islands nor maintaining it. Because we have had this ROTC since 1935, almost 67 years ago, and it has certainly not deterred these countries from claiming and occupying a part of the Spratly Islands.

So, having said that, I think making the ROTC optional will not in any way affect adversely our claim as well as our efforts to get the other countries to respect our sovereign authority over the Spratly Islands. I think the most important aspect there, as my colleague mentioned, is diplomacy. We have to be hard in our diplomacy. As he said, not just visit, shake hands and even forget about it. I think this is really what happened most recently.

I hope that satisfies my friend's anxiety as far as making ROTC optional is concerned, Mr. President.

Senator Villar. I agree that the ROTC program has not been a deterrent to China or to any country. It cannot be a deterrent. It is too inadequate to be a deterrent. But we have two options. When we have a program that is correct but inadequate, we have the option of strengthening the program or abolishing it. If we feel that it could be a deterrent if it is handled properly, then the correct move is to strengthen it. But we are taking the other stand. We are removing it.

I feel that the only resource of our country is its people. We do not have materials; we do not have guns; we do not have planes; we do not have ships. But we have a lot of people. Too many.

Therefore, that can only be the deterrent but they have to be trained. I realize and accept that there has been inadequate training. I accept that ROTC is poorly implemented. But I am just curious as to whether we are correcting a mistake by another mistake.

Senator Cayetano. Mr. President, I share the concern of my colleague here. But let me point out that, as I said earlier, there is a citizens reserve force under Republic Act No. 7077 which would require registration and military training of every citizen, male and female, aged 18 to 25. I think we should not only rely on the basic ROTC. But if we do, indeed, want to make use of—as my colleague mentioned—our only resource which is our number, then we have

to mobilize the citizens reserve force which under the law, Republic Act No. 7077, is required to be mobilized. But again, because of financial constraint, we have not done this. There are many people out there who are not enrolled in college and, therefore, are not taking basic ROTC.

As Sen. John Osmeña mentioned, we are looking at more or less 20 million young men and women between the ages of 18 to 25. But, how many individuals are enrolled? For the number of years I mentioned, I think for five years, about 1.5 million that we talked about. We still have the possibility of mobilizing the only greatest resource that we have, which is the human resource, if and when we do need to mobilize. But just relying on ROTC as mandatory subject may not really bring forth the desire that our colleague now would like, which means, to be able to deter the aggressors vis-a-vis our claim on the Spratly Islands. Just as an example, Mr. President.

Senator Villar. I just voiced that possibility because clearly, we either have the financial resources, the material resources, or we have the human resources. We just have the human resources. We do not have the material or financial resources. I do not think we will be having the financial and the material resources for a long, long while.

I think for a long, long while, we will have the human resources and I thought that maybe we could use that as the only logical deterrent to any foreign intervention. I would not even say invasion, I do not think they will invade us.

Also, I would like to say that actually, it is not likely that we will be abused, it is not likely that there will be war if there is respect. The more a country respects our capability, the less the probability of a war happening and the less the probability that it will abuse us.

So actually, when we say that train our people, prepare our people, it is not to go into war, it is not to resist an invasion, but rather it is to prevent an invasion because then we can be respected. Then, an invader will be afraid. For example, the US, it is bombing Afghanistan because it can bomb Afghanistan. Will it bomb China? Will it bomb Japan? Will it bomb Russia? But it can bomb Afghanistan. It is considering bombing Iraq. But will it bomb China? Will it bomb Japan? I doubt it.

Senator Cayetano. Who knows, Mr. President, if the gentleman had seen that movie "Dr. Strange Love." I believe...

But anyway, I think this guy wanted to make war precisely with China.

But levity aside, Mr. President, I do realize the concern of my colleague here.

Senator Villar. I raised these possibilities just on record. That I raised these possibilities at this time, and also for us to consider this in crafting a new ROTC program, an alternative to the ROTC program taking the changes of the September 11 incident and the possibility that in the next decades, we will be involved in very serious strategic military positioning in Southeast Asia and involving the three major players—China, Japan and US.

My third point, Mr. President, is, I think the passage of this bill is given considering the support of our colleagues.

But let me just say that I read the options and the alternatives. I would suggest in the period of amendments the inclusion of the training program for preparedness, just in case, for terroristic activities or chemical warfare.

But I would like to add, and I do not know whether the sponsor of this bill would say this as logical. There is the peacekeeping program and then there is the civic welfare services. But I have always thought that the strength of a country really lies in the economic development of that country.

In other words, to me the more economically developed country, the better is its defense. Therefore, if we are to remove ROTC—ROTC that in the past served as one of our tools for our defense, if we are going to remove that or move it on a much smaller scale, then, at least, we can focus on an alternative program that would utilize our young people for economic development. Because to me, one of the reasons if not the main reason, we are weak militarily is that we are poor. Therefore, to strengthen the country militarily, the best approach would be for us to develop economically.

In fact, most of the internal security problems, the NPA, the Muslim problems in the south, the peace-and-order problems would be much less if we are developed economically.

So, Mr. President, is it possible to include a program for economic development, entrepreneurial maybe, to offer an entrepreneurial course as an alternative to ROTC? Maybe, a program designed by the DTI to create more entrepreneurs from our young people. I think it is very important that we encourage our young people to become entrepreneurs. If we succeed in encouraging them to become entrepreneurs, only then can we truly develop economically and strengthen our military capability.

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President, coming from one of those rare successful entrepreneurs in this country, the proposal to include as part of the alternative service program vis-a-vis entrepreneurship and livelihood program will be most welcome.

In fact, I would like to add that our other colleague here, Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, has also reserved just for the sake of amendment precisely the point mentioned by our colleague. The committee will certainly look forward to that particular amendment at the proper time, Mr. President.

Senator Villar. I would like to thank my dear colleague for the time that he has given this representation. This I feel in its totality is still a good bill. We just have to improve on the options and be aware that our country really needs to prepare our citizens for any contingency in the future that might occur.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Cayetano. Thank you, Mr. President. I would also like to thank the President Pro Tempore, Senator Villar. We will certainly look forward to that particular amendment.

The President. The Majority Leader is recognized.

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, for interpellation, I ask that we recognize Sen. Panfilo M. Lacson.

The President. Sen. Panfilo M. Lacson is recognized.

Senator Lacson. Thank you, Mr. President. Will the gentleman from Taguig, Pateros, Muntinlupa, Philippines and Michigan yield for a few questions?

Senator Cayetano. With honor and privilege, Mr. President, to my colleague from Cavite, Parañaque, Baguio, Cebu, the Philippines and New York.

Senator Lacson. Mr. President, Section 4 of the proposed bill provides for the clustering of students from the different educational institutions. Now, what will be the basis of such clustering?

Senator Cayetano. My good colleague here is correct, Mr. President. Under Section 4, it proposes the clustering of affected students from different educational institutions. The factor here that we foresee is that the number of students who will enroll in optional ROTC will be diminished. Therefore, for practical and logistical purpose, it may be difficult for the Department of National Defense to hold one optional ROTC program for one university with a lesser number of enrollees—as we can really foresee that there will be less—so that the formula we are looking for here is geographical, the location of the school.

For instance, in the university belt, we have UE, UST, FEU and other schools. In other words, the location of the schools and

colleges where because of the number of enrollees that will decrease as we foresee, and as I said, it might be logical and also practical to cluster the students coming from the different universities but located more or less in the same geographical area. So the factor that we are looking at here is the geographical location of the colleges.

Senator Lacson. What about the number of students?

Senator Cayetano. That is also one of the reasons, Mr. President. That is why, for instance, if for some reason—I think UE has now the greatest number of students, next is FEU—there are enough students as far as the National Defense Department is concerned because optional ROTC will remain with the National Defense Department as the administrative supervisor of this program, if in the view of the National Defense Department that having just one training module for basic optional ROTC for FEU, for instance, because of the number of enrollees, they will not be included in the clustering.

So, the number of students, the gentleman is correct, is also going to be taken into consideration.

Senator Lacson. Thank you, Mr. President. But I understand not all participating schools are under a distinct branch of service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Suppose we have a situation here, say, UE, FEU or any of the nearby educational institutions in which military training is being undertaken by two or more, or even three major services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines—the Philippine Navy, the Philippine Air Force and the Philippine Army—how will the merging of the training be undertaken, Mr. President?

Senator Cayetano. I would like to thank my colleague here, Mr. President, for bringing it out. We must confess that we did not take into consideration that, in fact, the three branches of the Armed Forces of the Philippines have different ROTC units in the school.

Certainly, now that it has been brought out, Mr. President, at the proper time, we will consider it as an honor if Senator Lacson will certainly amplify that.

But, at present, I understand, there is a minimum of 300 ROTC cadets that enrolled in ROTC units per school. And this combines the whole three... Only one unit of the armed forces.

SUSPENSION OF SESSION

Mr. President, I move that we suspend the session for one minute.

The President. The session is suspended for one minute, if there is no objection. *[There was none.]*

It was 6:02 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF SESSION

At 6:04 p.m., the session was resumed.

The President. The session is resumed. Sen. Renato L. Compañero Cayetano is recognized.

Senator Cayetano. With the permission of my colleague here who, for the record, will show us also a participant in our informal discussion with the representative of the Department of National Defense.

Mr. President, the point brought out by Senator Lacson is relevant because, as we know, there are three branches of the Armed Forces of the Philippines—the air force, the army and the navy.

I understand now, Mr. President, that for every school like, for instance, La Salle and Feati, it only enrolls Air Force ROTC.

So what happens now is, if a college student from La Salle or Feati does not want to enroll in air force ROTC, he can cross-enroll to another university which may offer army ROTC. So the point brought out by my colleague here, Senator Lacson, as I said, is well-taken.

But according to the staff here, what can happen here, Mr. President, is, if there are enough enrollees in a school—350—that will remain as such. But it is limited to a branch of the armed forces, like Feati or La Salle. But if there are not enough enrollees, what will happen is, there will be cross-enrollees, to different schools. So, at the proper time, having said that, I would like my good friend here to propose an amendment with proper wordings so that indeed the clusterings will not only be geographical—the number of students—but also the branches of the armed forces by which they prefer to enroll in an optional ROTC.

Senator Lacson. Thank you, Mr. President.

Lastly, Section 6 provides that in the formulation of the IRR, concerned agencies, like DND and the CHED, shall consult with the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC), the Coordinating Council of Private Educational Association of the Philippines (COCOPEA) and the University of the Philippines.

May this representation be enlightened on why the students

who are the most affected by this proposed bill need not be included in the groups that are supposed to be consulted?

Senator Cayetano. Yes, Mr. President. The explanation for that is this: We did consult with all sectors, including the student leaders in Metro Manila as well as in Cebu where, as I said, the student leaders from Bohol and Davao joined in. The only reason the student groups are not involved at all is that the administration of the optional ROTC will lie on the school authorities that belong to either private school or state-owned universities. That is the only reason for that aspect. There is no other reason for that, Mr. President.

Senator Lacson. Anyway, thank you, Mr. President. I would also like to thank the gentleman from Taguig and Pateros.

Senator Cayetano. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Lacson.

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, there being no other interpellations I move that we close the period of interpellations.

The President. Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, the motion is approved.

SUSPENSION OF CONSIDERATION OF S. NO. 1824

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, I move that we suspend consideration of Senate Bill No. 1824 under Committee Report No. 3.

The President. Is there any objection? *[Silence]* There being none, the motion is approved.

MOTION OF SENATOR LEGARDA LEVISTE (Withdrawal of Previous Motion that S. No. 783 Stays with National Defense Committee)

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, before we adjourn, I would just like to manifest that the request of Sen. Rodolfo G. Biazon for a change of referral has been withdrawn and therefore, Senate Bill No. 783 stays with the Committee on National Defense.

The President. Is there any objection to the reconsideration of the referral? *[Silence]* There being none, the motion is approved.

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, I move that we adjourn today's session until tomorrow...

The President. Before the Majority Leader will do so, Sen. Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. wishes to raise a point.

Senator Legarda Leviste. Mr. President, the Minority Leader wishes to make a manifestation.

MANIFESTATION OF SENATOR PIMENTEL (Report on Parliamentary Visit to United Kingdom Be Part of the Record)

Senator Pimentel. Mr. President, may we just request that the Minority Report of our Parliamentary Visit to the United Kingdom be made part of the *Record* for journal purposes.

The President. The Secretary is hereby directed to make that of record.

Would the Minority agree that it be made a Delegation Report since only...

Senator Pimentel. The only reason we denominated it as the Minority Report, Mr. President, is that we failed to ask the Chair's permission first but we would be very happy to make this a report of our UK parliamentary visit.

The President. It is amended as a Delegation Report.

The following is the whole text of the Delegation Report on Its Parliamentary Visit to the United Kingdom:

Upon the invitation of the British Inter-Parliamentary Union Group, Minority Senators Vicente Sotto III, Robert Jaworski and Aquilino Pimentel accompanied Senate President Franklin Drilon to a "reciprocal" visit to the United Kingdom from November 3-9.

Senator Pimentel had rined up the visit in talks with British parliamentarians in June of this year in London.

Speaker Jose de Venecia led our counterparts from the House, namely, Representatives Eric Singson of Ilocos Sur, Aleta Suarez of Quezon and Roy Lopez of Davao City.

Sunday activities

**Embassy briefing*

Day one formally began with a briefing for the delegation that our Ambassador to the UK Cesar Bautista and his staff conducted at the Athenaeum Hotel in London where the delegation was billeted.

Among the briefing highlights were: