

SPEECH AND PRESS CONFERENCE
OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR DA NANG CITY, VIET NAM FOR THE 2017 APEC
ECONOMIC LEADERS' MEETING

[Delivered at Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 2, Pasay City | 08 November 2017]

Kindly sit down and thank you for your courtesy.

Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea and the other members of the Cabinet; His Excellency Quoc Tuan, Vietnam Ambassador to the Philippines; Pasay City Representative Emi Calixto-Rubiano; AFP Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Rey Leonardo Guerrero and the other service commanders; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

Today I am leaving for Da Nang, Viet Nam for the 2017 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting.

I anticipate a highly productive meeting, and I look forward to exchanging ideas with my fellow leaders and old friends on how we can strengthen relationships to sustain the economic vigor of the Asia Pacific region.

As a founding member of APEC, the Philippines has hosted the Economic leaders meeting twice. Our continued engagement [is] an investment in our economic future as our country seeks to sustain our development and work towards more significant investments and a golden age of infrastructure.

I have accepted the invitation to speak to APEC CEOs [to] dialogue with big businesses, sustain our economic gains and contribute to the prosperity of the larger Asia Pacific region.

I will also participate in our continuing dialogue with the APEC Business Advisory Council to deepen regional economic growth integration and to promote inclusive growth.

When the Philippines hosted APEC, we have put forward these important initiatives of promoting inclusive growth, investing in human capital development, and [fostering MSMEs'] participation in the global market.

In the APEC meeting in Lima, Peru, I strongly supported the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap, a key outcome [for] our country, since the services sector is the biggest contributor to our GDP --- ibig sabihin tao.

I made a strong pitch for food security through sustainable economic, agricultural, forest and fisheries, beneficial policies [for] MSMEs, regulatory reform, human capital development and connectivity and inclusive growth.

This year, we will amplify that call [with] renewed vigor.

We will continue to reiterate the themes of development and economic growth, in order to reinforce our strategic --- importance to achieve the goals of realizing a prosperous Philippines with equal access to opportunities to all.

As chair of ASEAN, we will use these platforms of ASEAN and APEC to promote advocacies close to the heart of every Filipino –access to international markets of our MSMEs, a comfortable life for our people --- comfortable lang, okay na ako. Not so good a life or a luxurious life. I only dream for my country a better life for our people --- food security, connectivity, the rule of law, anti-corruption and regional security.

At the inaugural dialogue between APEC and ASEAN, as ASEAN Chair, I will engage the Leaders of our greater Asia Pacific region to commit in pursuing our shared economic prosperity.

This, as we work jointly to ensure that our region is secure from the menace of transnational crimes such as illegal drug trade, terrorism and [violent] extremism and crimes at sea or what you would know as piracy or piracy if you may.

Finally, we give support to our ASEAN brother, Viet Nam, who holds this year's economic --- and the APEC Chairmanship.

This year is indeed a rare opportunity where two ASEAN member states chair key regional meetings – which is an opportunity to push for the ASEAN economic agenda.

Upon my return, I hope to build up on the discussions at APEC to boost the Philippines' and ASEAN's agenda in our Chairmanship of the 31st ASEAN Summit and Related other Summits.

Thank you and may you have a good day!

Maybe I can... Secretary Andanar, if you have some guys who would like to ask questions, I would gladly entertain.

Maraming naka-linya ah. Isa-isa lang, mabigat ang kalaban.

Q: Good afternoon, President. This time in Da Nang will be a special meeting between APEC and ASEAN.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Yes.

Q: It's APEC-ASEAN Dialogue --- Leaders' Dialogue Meeting. And I know as a Chairperson of ASEAN you will be host to that meeting. And also Chinese President Xi Jinping will also deliver an important speech in that meeting. So I would like to know, as a Chair of ASEAN, what kind of expectation you will raise in that meeting and what's your expectation from Chinese side you want to hear in that meeting? Thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Well, first of all, they should be hearing me as I would deliver the plenary, first round, and maybe I'll talk about economic imbalance and the impact of globalization on those countries who are left behind.

Those countries, like us, who export resources and they are manufactured outside of the country and we import them again, double the price of what we get when we export.

These are the things that globalization has created, a big gap. I hope that the economic giants would make the adjustments, eh tatal kung ano 'yung ibigay nila sa atin kita na nila 'yan eh.

It is not taxes of the people of their own country, but rather what they have maybe earned over the years as they occupy a higher ladder in the agenda of the economic world. So and terrorism, and of course the China Sea.

It's about time that ASEAN countries, not really to confront, but to make clear to us what China really wants.

I suppose that I'd bring the matter because while we were focused on the dangers of North Korea, regarding its sabre-rattling and lahat doon nakatingin. And I do not take it against China.

He has claimed every part of it and nobody stopped him. So tanungin ko lang siya, "What are the stakes? You want to control the passage or do we have the free passage?"

Unbridled, undisturbed, unmolested, while we use that small way from the Indian Ocean, the Indochina Pacific which is facing Palawan.

Not because I'm so much interested as a person but for the sake of my country and the others who have the overlapping claims.

And that is why, the truth is, if I could only confront China or if it is China alone --- that's the problem. But I said, there are contesting countries which have overlapping jurisdictions.

And if I engage China now, I will have to engage the five others. It would be something like a scramble there because if China concedes to one, Philippines, it has to concede to the others.

And what will now happen to our general claim of being the economic zone belonging to my country? That's a problem.

So it's about time either in the bilateral or in the plenary, I should be bringing this important matter to the surface.

So that we will know when can we be safe in traveling the China --- expansive, because they have claimed it now and I'm sure that...

Trump now is busy talking about, you know, it's all [blustery?]. The real reason really is geopolitics.

Nobody wants a war. I am very sure of that. China does not want it because if there is a bomb dropped somewhere in Korea, it will be a meltdown for the rest of Asia and Southeast Asia.

It's all geopolitics. The name of the game is... But in --- if not, maybe handled properly, you know, politics, political power of a country and the military might --- might is right, right is might --- it could change the whole geographical situation.

Geography is always dependent on how the powers of that era handle themselves.

Q: One follow-up. Because you will meet President Xi in APEC and after APEC you meet our Chinese Premier Li Keqiang here in the Philippines...

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Yes.

Q: And it's his first time to pay an official visit to the Philippines. So I would like to know, like in one week you will meet the top two Chinese leaders, so how do you see the future between our two countries?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Look, we are all for a peaceful negotiations. It's always a mouthful of leaders saying rule-based and the UNCLOS prescribes a peaceful resolution of conflicts of nations.

We will stick to that. We are friends with China. May utang na loob tayo. At one moment in our life or the lives of the Filipinos, they were there to give us the arms when we had none and we were fighting it out in Marawi.

These are the things that we cannot forget. But these things should not be used as, not really a pawn, but as bargaining chips on what is the greater interest of Southeast Asia and more particularly, the higher interest of our country.

Iba 'yung --- nagpapasalamat ako sa iyo. I do not deny that. But let us be clear on what we intend to do here because eventually it will affect the entire Philippine archipelago.

Now remember I said it's geopolitics. But the larger portion of that really is there are so many military installations and the islands are equipped with batteries, itong mga missiles and everything.

They are all there scattered --- and Vietnam has one. I said there's an overlapping claim of territory. Taiwan also is claiming the northern part, which will result in a very serious quarrel with us.

And on the southern part you have the Indonesian government also claiming. And the southern western part would be Malaysia.

Singapore is --- and Brunei seems to be nonchalant about it because they are sure of their boundaries. And they do not have the slightest interest to use sea power.

But ours is strategic in the sense that facing all the armaments there and the bodies, we have the ace --- and the ace is Palawan.

You cannot sink an island, but I can always blast you off if you are there on the open seas.

And that is why, let me just be frank with the Filipinos now, they say the Philippines is strategic in the sense that there is the south, which is rocked with insurrection, extremism.

So you have to take care of... You can just imagine, I don't know. I hope it would not... But if there's a change of geography or whatever development there, Australia will be an isolated island.

If we cannot have the control of the ships here, the Malacca Strait, it is to the advantage of Malaysia, Philippines and the United States to see to it that the Malacca which connects to the Sulu Sea to the Indochina passage, from Indian Ocean going in, 'yun ang...

What makes the Philippines very strategic is really Palawan. It faces the China Sea and it is a one huge battleship, which you cannot sink. Nakuha mo?

Pia Ranada (Rappler): Good afternoon, sir.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Are you with Rappler still?

Ms. Ranada: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Rappler ka 'no?

Ms. Ranada: Yes po.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Good.

Ms. Ranada: Sir, can I just go to my question first? Because you're expected to meet US President Donald Trump for the first time in Viet Nam. So, first question is what are your expectations for this first meeting? And second question, what are the issues you plan to raise with him during your bilateral meeting whether in Viet Nam or here in Manila?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Well, number one is always trade because that is the very life of nations.

Then, we will discuss extremism, terrorism. And third, maybe sa bilateral, they might want to ask a very definitive position of the Philippines vis-à-vis with China.

And to all of these things, I would just say that we all hunger for peace and if we can talk about it in a very civilized manner, I would be glad to participate in the discussion.

Ms. Ranada: Sir, just to clarify the point about China. You said you wanted to discuss with President Trump their position vis-à-vis the South China Sea dispute?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Yes, of course.

Ms. Ranada: What exactly will you tell him? What would you want to impart to him about this issue?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: China?

Ms. Ranada: To Trump, sir, 'yung China issue with Trump?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Well, my response would always be based on what they have agreed on.

I think they're meeting ahead and we will wait for the results and I will be in a position to give him at least a balanced answer.

Ms. Ranada: Sir, are you going to ---

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: I am not... The Philippines is not beholden to anyone.

The Philippines is a sovereign state. I will not allow anybody to impose anything on my country.

I will listen to you. But if it is not to the best of interest for my country, I will ignore you.

Ms. Ranada: Sir, just again medyo not clear pa rin po 'yung position niyo. You want to... What position do you demand of the US or would you want to ask from the US with regards to the South China Sea dispute? Are you asking them to take a side?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: I said I cannot. I have to hear them first before I make my response. Because it will be based on the outcome of their talks and the points that would touch the Philippines I said and I would have to decide what is best for my country alone.

And it will be a decision that will promote the higher interest --- the greatest interest, as a matter of fact, for my country.

That's why we're meeting there, we meet as sovereigns.

I will not go there as a subservient lackey of anyone including what you would like to hear from me but which you cannot ask maybe or later on about human rights.

Ms. Ranada: Thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: You want to ask a question? I'll give you an answer.

Lay off. That's not your business. That is my business. I take care of my country and I will nurture my country to [inaudible]. Nobody would...

Leila Salaverria (Philippine Daily Inquirer): Good afternoon, sir. Sir, on a local --- more local matters. Sir, we just like to get confirmation. Did you ask that DDB Chair Dionisio Santiago resign from his post because of his views on the Mega Rehab Facility in Nueva Ecija?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Well, ganito kasi. Nagbitaw siya ng salita that "it is a waste of money," that "it is not the right approach."

You know, you saw him in the previous administration. He was there. Bakit hindi niya ginawa?

And to think na sabihin mo that force or military action alone or police action alone or both endeavors working together, 'di ba nakita mo pa siya sa TV pinagsisipa niya 'yung mga tao doon?

So he came up with a very incongruous statement that I was offended. He could have asked me for an audience and then tell me all about it.

Kaya kita inilagay diyan, not to issue statements to the press. Inilagay kita diyan para magpunta ka sa akin kung ano ang problema natin sa bayan natin at turuan mo ako kung nagkulang ako kung anong dapat kong gawin.

But you do not go open to the press and start to blabber. When as a matter of fact, your previous action... 'Di ba nung siya pa, it was caught on TV, pinagsisipa niya 'yung tao.

And then you come up with this deal that... If you'd like to echo what is the popular --- it's always what is popular eh. Kung sasakay ka lang diyan...

Me? I said I do not... I do not have a --- eh 'di wala na... I cannot be re-elected. I'm there to work, and so I will work.

And I rely on my judgment. If my talent is not enough, then you elect me as President, eh 'di sorry.

That is the only talent that I have. But I said if it comes to destroying my country and destroying the young, I repeat, I will kill you.

Ms. Salaverria: Sir, have you decided on his replacement?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Walang ano-ano diyan. But now umiwas na ako and I am really very surprise that they are still harping on me when, as a matter of fact, I have distanced myself from the PDEA. It is now the PDEA.

If it works very well, then I am ready to accept. Just like in Marawi and other police and military operations upon my orders I take full legal responsibility. Period. You can sue me and I will be glad to go to prison.

Ms. Salaverria: Sir, have you decided on a replacement for Mr. Santiago?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Let's talk about it when I... We'll have a cup of coffee in my office and I'll tell you all about it.

Ms. Salaverria: Sir, shift lang ako, sir, sa ibang topic.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Kasi 'yung piloto oh, nagagalit na.

Ms. Salaverria: Sir, isa na lang po. Sir, why did you order the stopping of the construction of nipa huts in Pag-asa Island, near Pag-asa Island?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Where is that?

Ms. Salaverria: Sir? Sa Pag-asa Island, sir, 'yung --- ?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: I'm not quite aware of... Wala akong... Is it a housing or --- ?

Ms. Salaverria: Nipa huts for fishermen because of Chinese objections.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: No. China never 'yung... In fairness to China, it never talked a strong, harm [inaudible].

They always say, "Your Honorable." It starts with, "Your Honorable, can we talk about this?" "Can we talk about this?" To my mind, I said, "There are so many contesting parties there overlapping."

Maybe the rest of the nation thinks that ang problema natin sa China Sea is China alone. Kasi there are overlapping territorial claims there.

So you have to... It's better understood in the light of just talking to the nations. Ang China naman, they allowed us to fish and they go to the Pag-asa, and I... I might as well...

Sabi ko, "You can go there for a visit." As a matter of fact, you can shake hands with the commander there, sa military.

I will tell my military men to treat you to a lunch and... But do not do anything that will disturb the equilibrium now present there.

Ms. Salaverria: Thank you.

Cedric Castillo (GMA-7): Sir, good afternoon. On the filing of the Ombudsman of usurpation of authority and graft charges against President --- former President Aquino. Sir, Senator Trillanes says that it sets a bad precedent that --- in that every time an operation fails, ‘yung Presidente daw po ang fa-filan (file) ng kaso o irereklamo, sir. I’d like to get your thoughts on this, and would you agree with Senator Trillanes, sir?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: You know, that is what life is all about. For the first time or for the second or third time, Trillanes has a good point there.

‘Yung usurpation of authority, actually, I don’t know if I am still good at my law. But you know, the President has the supervision and control.

Supervision and control means he can overturn your decision or will decide to exercise the function itself. All those under the appointed officers, lahat ‘yan sila under the control.

‘Yung function ng police, function ng military, the --- the President can always intervene, modify, amend, or change altogether your ideas.

And if he decides to do the police work himself, he is the Commander-in-Chief. He is the head of government insofar as the police is concerned kasi civilian in character nga.

For the military, he is the Commander-in-Chief. For the civi... Dalawa ‘yan eh. Ganun ‘yan. Tumingin ka muna dito. Ganun ‘yan. The President is there. For the military, he’s the Commander-in-Chief.

For the civilian sector, mayor, lahat diyan na gobernador, the police, because it’s now a civilian agency, he is the head of government. Lahat ‘yan, kanya ‘yan.

Except dito sa local officials, the President has only the supervision. Meaning to say that he will oversee that everything under his supervision will do their work legally and properly, ‘yung mga governors, mayor. Elected ‘yan eh.

But for ‘yung appointed ng Presidente, it’s being headed by a Cabinet member, department of whatever, Transportation, he is the alter ego, the shadow of the President.

So if the main figure overrules the shadow, usurpation of authority, ‘yun ang sikreto --- usurpation of authority. You cannot usurp what is inherently your duty.

Okay? Tapos na? Take off na ako? Can I take off?

Salamat po. [applause]

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