

Presidential Communications Office

Presidential News Desk

SPEECH
OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE 120TH PHILIPPINE NAVY ANNIVERSARY

[Delivered at Coconut Palace, CCP Complex, Manila | 22 May 2018]

Daghang salamat. Kindly sit down.

I will be through in two minutes. Masyadong matipid ang...

House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez and other members of the House of Representatives; Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and the other members of the Cabinet; Senator Cynthia Villar, ma'am, maayong hapon; AFP Chief of Staff General Carlito Galvez and other major service commanders; the officers, enlisted personnel and reservists of the Philippine Navy led by its Flag Officer in Command Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad; the other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

I would have wanted to deliver a medyo --- a longer speech but talagang mainit ang panahon, and I know that it would be a relief if we go somewhere after this.

I will just read a very short speech but a very meaningful one.

I congratulate the Philippine Navy for its 120 years of unwavering service, sacrifice, dedication and commitment to defend our shores, protect our seas, and secure our maritime borders.

It was only last year when we celebrated the Philippine Navy's anniversary during the Marawi Siege. Then, we honored the heroic efforts of the men and women of the Navy and Marines in the liberation of Marawi. Today, we once again honor them as we make significant progress in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of that city.

To the brave soldiers and marines of our Navy, you have made the Filipino people proud and continue to do so with gallantry in defending our sovereignty in our territorial waters, particularly in the West Philippine Sea.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would have wanted to share with you my insights in the matter of the West Philippine Sea, its dynamics and, of course, the implication of geopolitics. But for lack of material time, I may do it some other venue which I think you'd be more comfortable to wait and listen to the policy.

It has something to do with my desire to defend but at the same time not to make any move that would be destructive to the nation. I cannot afford at this time to go to war. I cannot go into a battle which I cannot win and it would only result in the destruction and probably a lot of losses for our Armed Forces.

Ako gusto ko, I really want to do something to assert. But you know, when I assumed the presidency, there was already this ruckus in the West Philippine Sea. It used to be China Sea.

And because in my simple calculation, in every common sense that's available to me, I would have taken a stronger but probably a more violent way of doing it.

And I said in my own estimation, it would be a great loss to the nation and probably end up losing a war. And all of these things I have wanted to --- made known to you and whether you accept it or not, that is the reality on the ground.

It's geopolitics. You well know what are at stake. I cannot rely just on one nation and country to defend us and maybe to help us in our hour of need.

We had a very sad experience in the Marawi siege. And we all know and --- that we have fallen short in some respects the way it was handled. I assume full responsibility.

I did not anticipate or even guess that there would be so much ordnance and at the fight would took us about four months to finish.

All of these faults, if it is indeed one, or our faults, it belongs and it falls on my shoulders as Commander-in-Chief. And I assume full responsibility to the nation of what's going to happen.

Now I... As a matter of fact I was with... I am veering away from my speech already.

In the first bilateral meeting with China, I was there with General Lorenzana... By the way, troop commander, could you --- could I request you to give the order of tikas pahinga. I'm sorry I overlooked it.

General Lorenzana, Año and I think it was --- Año then was the Chief of Staff, Esperon, the National Security Adviser and a full Cabinet in a bilateral confrontation.

And I began by just asking that you know, if it's an inventory you can look at it and it's old firearms. The --- 'yung porma ng baril nandiyan. But those are old ones and sometimes it would falter in the heat of battle and place in jeopardy the lives of my soldiers.

And so I went around to buy new ones and the first thing I did was I announced to President Xi Jinping that I have come here to discuss about the arms and I will buy it, I'm not asking it for free. But in our long conversation, in one of those moments he said, "No, you just do not worry about it. We will give it to you free."

And because there was this shipment which was ordered from another country and we expected new ones because the intelligence even I was the mayor, you know, I have roots there in Marawi.

The intelligence came very fast that there was a buildup. And I said for all of its --- the shortsightedness maybe I --- it falls upon my shoulders to bear the burden. I and I alone should be responsible for that.

But anyway, I congratulate and I pay homage to my soldiers, my policemen and I was there almost nine times to join them even at night just to give them the esprit de corps to... It was a very harsh condition.

And by the way I also went to Russia and explained to them about my quandary about not having so much firearms or I needed new ones, the accurate ones, ones that had not been... If you can describe it, it's a battle-weary gun. And I had to get new ones.

And Putin had to come back earlier because my meeting with him was on the next day yet, has yet. But when he knew that I was coming home because it was at that time that Marawi exploded, I had to go home and to declare martial law in another country.

That is a painful realization to be signing something about your country, about the safety of your country, about the safety of the people and to give the orders outside of the Republic of the Philippines.

It... Probably, I would say that it leaves a dent in the --- in my own history when I go out of government service.

So masakit para sa akin na both Filipinos die. But since I am the Commander-in-Chief, I had to stay with my soldiers and my policemen and I will continue to place a premium.

Ganito kasi 'yan eh. A lot of complaints have been raised about government people raising howl about the doubling of salaries.

In an ordinary time or even during extreme conditions or extreme danger, we go out with the bureaucracy, we go out of our house expecting to be back at night to join our family.

But these guys, when they are called for an assignment and there's trouble, even a small pocket battles everywhere, the possibility of not coming home again or getting back to the house in horizontal position is not quite...

And so that is why I really... You know, I've been mayor for 23 years. 'Wag na ho kayong mag-ano nagyabang ako but my father was also governor of Davao province before it is only one.

And I'm quite maybe familiar of the dynamics that goes on and what role has the uniformed personnel had to do on those times. It's really a matter of life and death.

Maybe, I come --- maybe I will not make it with my family. That is the reason why nauna sila because I was way ahead actually. I made that promise as a campaign platform to improve the situation of the police and the military.

And I must admit that until now, we have so many problems involving the police. And we are struggling to correct things. We have --- I've chosen the best of the disciplinarians and known people who are really very strict in the military ways.

I think that I might return the training itself and the militaristic activity training of the police back to the PNP itself. It has not done good since we transfer it to a public safety, with due respect to General De Leon who was assigned in Davao City before.

He's very competent but the system is --- it ain't working. And we're producing, to my mind, some lousy men getting into the service under questionable circumstances.

Nagkulang tayo doon sa background check and even the matter of the protocol of joining the police. Marami diyan mga salbahe na who are really criminals, but who maneuvered somehow to get into the service.

And some of them, sadly, are really into drugs. So may I just remind everybody, including, most of all the policemen because they are aplenty. I'm just warning them that if you are into it, you will be the first to go.

You interpret it in many and whatever suits you would be fine, pero kayo talaga ang uunahin ko. And it is no surprise that you are just also falling down one by one, and the mayors and the barangay captains. It's a policy of which I cannot renege or even move a little backwards.

Drugs would destroy the nation, period. And the drug war will include the military and the police.

Now if I were to reduce abbreviated oath of office and for all of you, lahat tayo, it simply says our duty mandates us that we must --- it's a mandatory direction --- we must protect the people and preserve the nation.

And to all of those criminals out there and to all of those rogue policemen and all creating hell for us, I have yet sufficient time to correct all of these things.

You might not like the way how I correct things but I would just love to warn you that walang atrasan 'to and I am there in the drug war in front, behind you guys law enforcement and the military people.

And I assure you in front of everybody, that I will not allow a single soldier or policeman whatever be the rank to go to prison just because he was performing his duty. Hindi mangyayari 'yan. [applause]

Not one of you, I promise you, will go to jail. I will never allow it. And I said in this campaign against drugs and the so many illegal things, I stake my honor --- I've been repeating that all these years, even during the campaign. I stake my honor, my life, and the presidency itself.

Wala akong illusions about staying there for six years or for four years, two years. What I'm really would like to happen is that, by the time I leave, at least I leave with a country where the people are just comfortable, period.

Not overfed but neither hungry. And so I have so many things to do and we are trying to do it. I am complying all of my promises.

Graft and corruption, I fire people everyday including Cabinet members. In the drug war, marami akong --- they just don't know it. I think the problem with these some organizations --- I'd like to be courteous to them. Gusto kong magmura pero because of the crowd and in deference to your celebration.

You know, look at the newspaper everyday. And look at the --- I said 'yung PTV 4 which is government, to publish how many policemen and soldiers get killed everyday. Three, four, three, four, five in drug-related, violent confrontations.

The Marawi itself was precipitated by the service of a warrant against the Maute relative for drugs. And I've been warning the government and people that the rebellion there is being funded by shabu.

It's a chemical that is really intended for the poor. That is why the perpetual attack or complaint is "bakit 'yung mga mahirap ang namamatay."

You know, the vogue now or the fad if you may, is really shabu is intended sa mga mahirap. At doon ang labanan kasi they do it openly and they do not have the mansions. They don't have the ships and the yachts to do it. Mahirap lang 'to eh. So karamihan nag-engkwentro.

And I must admit that they were abuses. And we go after them. But kung sabihin mo na ipakulong mo 'yung pulis ko kasi nagtrabaho, nagbarilan, no.

You know I'm a lawyer and I've been a prosecutor. If you become my client, you are a criminal, all I have to do is to file countercharges of physical abuse.

Then the poor policeman has a case to contend with and when he is suspended, which is usually the case, kung may kaso ka, whether it is a trumped-up charge, a fabricated, or whatever, that policeman gets suspended and the family suffers the lack of food and the stopping of the education of their children. Kaya diyan ako nasasaktan. Diyan ako naano.

Other people they go to the other countries and they are being abused, they are being killed. And when they send the money back home, these idiots here, they know and they would just rub it in like a sore thumb everyday until bibigay 'yung tao.

Kaya ako nasasaktan at 'yung you know, if a family loses a mother who goes out to work, that family becomes dysfunctional. If the father goes out to work in other places, that family becomes dysfunctional.

If the mother and father works abroad, that family is totally unstable, dysfunctional at iiwan lang 'yung mga anak diyan sa mga kapatid, sa --- 'yung iba sa kapitbahay para lang makapag-aral ang anak nila and they endure sleepless nights, food that is... I'm not attributing to anybody.

We're okay now with Kuwait, we're okay now with Kuwait. My conditions were met. That they must be guaranteed before I signed the lifting of the ban. And the Kuwait government has shown the courage also in meeting our challenge.

I demanded that they'd be allowed to sleep seven hours guaranteed, no physical abuse, that their cellphones and passports are not confiscated, and they have a day off once a week.

So if these conditions are met, I'll sign the total --- the lifting of the ban.

And frankly I'd like to thank officially the Kuwait government for giving us these conditions, which would better place in a more --- maski konting kaligayahan lang naman sa mga OFWs. And I think that would be really, from now on, the conditions that would be a condition sine qua non before we enter into context about our brothers and sisters abroad.

Nasasaktan ako. Kaya kayong mga durugista, do not destroy my country because I will kill you. Do not destroy the young of my country, they are just our only resource. Papatayin talaga kita.

We are a poor nation, we hardly make both ends meet. Pero 'pag g***** mo ako at what was this... You know, my father was Chinese, Lam so kayong mga Intsik nakikinig, do not bother being hurt.

Karamihan mga diyan sa Cebu na mga yumaman sa drugs tapos magyabang pa na... You know I... yes, I openly admitted in Congress that I was playing with drugs. But you know, it's a merchandise that you have to be caught with it or in your control.

And even if it's just a warehouse, if you are out of it a kilometer away and say, "I do not have anything with that," that's it, just like a firearm.

You must be apprehended with a firearm in your control or possession just like drugs because kung wala silang makuha sa bulsa mo and then they would just go about and proclaim "ahh you know, it's correct. I admitted it before Congress, that I was playing with drugs, trafficking of drugs but you know, wala man kayong question, evidence that I ever ever had in my possession."

You know, if you do that publicly tapos you flaunt it as if you are the righteous person just because there is no evidence although you were the ones responsible.

You know if I were you guys in Cebu, stay in jail. You want to live longer? Stay in jail. Maghanap ka --- look for your own reason to be in jail. Do not go out of that facility. It would not be healthy for you. So I have my... And I can assure you that I see a lot of ships there out.

And for the little resources that we have, the only thing that we have that we would aspire is to have more income.

I hold it as an article of faith having been mayor, congressman, vice mayor to my daughter. And all of the 40 years, I would have completed --- I never lost an election. If I complete my term as President for six years, I would have served government. I started as a prosecutor and in the fullness of God's time, inshallah, kung hindi well, alam ninyo na although it is not to the liking of everybody and I don't give a s**... I do not craft my career to the predilections of other persons.

I will just finish it baka nakikinig 'yung gumawa nito.

We likewise recognize your accomplishments and contributions in humanitarian assistance, maritime law enforcement, counter-terrorism, and disaster relief operations. These noble endeavors have made our kababayans feel safer in challenging circumstances.

We are indeed excite --- we live in exciting times for our armed forces as we further enhance the capability of our Navy.

Since the beginning of this administration, I have exerted efforts to upgrade your equipment and artillery, which now include additional two units of TC90 aircraft, two units of multi-purpose assault crafts and one strategic sealift vessel, among others.

I am happy to say that the government is currently working on implementing the Second Horizon of the Revised AFP Modernization Program, which encompasses a number of projects for the Philippine [Navy] amounting to P77 billion.

By the way, allow me to just insert something. I don't know if I'm supposed to make it public and I really do not have a way of knowing whether it would make Esperon happy or not.

But in my table before I left, that's why I was late because I was reviewing it.

Jordan is giving us two Cobra helicopters. Those things that we cannot really afford. Maybe in my term pagkatapos... [applause]

You know there was this... I was criticized by a human rights commissioner, or the highest guy. And he said, "maybe Duterte needs to go to the psychiatrist."

I would have wanted to but Esperon said, "no, do not do it. Maybe mayor, you can swallow insults. Anyway you are doing it because everyday you are throwing curses, epithets and all and the people that you... Eh hindi man rin sila makaganti, this time I am asking you to shut up."

Why? You know that high official there is the brother of the king of Jordan. Because I prepared a little you know, as a maybe a rebuttal and I said --- and he said, “please do not do it or else we will... I will lose the...”

He was the one who worked for it. He is now there in Jordan and I got this electronic copy for his authority to accept it. And to Jordan, which faces the same problem like the Philippines, it's terrorism.

I would have wanted to talk about terrorism and how the geopolitics in this region are played. But I'm willing to have breakfast with your officer and explain my position why am I adopting this policy.

Some of you, the smart ones, alam mo naman. We cannot fight a battle. So what am I doing? What I am doing? So I do not have time but I am willing to talk to you guys. Everyone of you, let's have a boodle fight and I will explain to you how geopolitics is evolving in this part of the region.

I will finish by saying: Together with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, I am confident that one day, we will realize our aspiration of building a strong and resilient nation.

I therefore ask each of you to do your part so that in the next 120 years, we can establish a naval force that will last lifetime and maybe we can start invading other nations. [laughter]

Again, happy 120th anniversary at mabuhay ang Hukbong Dagat ng Pilipinas.

Congratulations and my snappy salute. [applause]

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