

Presidential Communications Office

Presidential News Desk

**DEPARTURE STATEMENT
AND PRESS CONFERENCE
OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
ON HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

[Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 2, Pasay City | 01 October 2019]

Kindly sit down.

The Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea; Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra and the other members of the Cabinet; House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano and the other honorable members of the House of Representatives; Senator Bong Go; Manila International Airport Authority General Manager Eddie Monreal; the officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police; our local and elected government officials who are here with us this afternoon --- this evening; mga kababayan.

I leave today for an Official Visit to the Russian Federation upon the invitation of President Vladimir Putin.

I welcome this second visit as an important opportunity to further broaden and deepen our engagement with a country we share key strategic interests with both bilaterally and in the larger Asia-Pacific region.

In Sochi, I will meet President Putin to take stock of the state of our bilateral relations. We will identify ways of further intensifying cooperation areas of security and defense, combatting terrorism and violent extremism, and addressing transnational crimes.

Certainly, I will take the opportunity to discuss regional and global

developments that impact the Philippines and Russia as key points of convergence of national interests where we can work together.

We expect key agreements - including in political cooperation, health, science and technology, and culture - to be signed.

I will also join President Putin and other world leaders at the Forum of the Valdai International Discussion Club. We are each expected to provide our own perspective on the topic "The Dawn of the East and the World Political Order".

This will be an opportune occasion to articulate, to a key audience, our independent Philippine foreign policy – one that is based on respect for sovereignty and non-interference, the time-honoured principles of international law. Apparently this most basic principle of a rule that governs the relations between nations have been forgotten by some idiots in some parts of the world.

In Moscow, I will meet Filipino and Russian business leaders to encourage more economic linkages.

I will also engage academics and the students of the Moscow Institute of International Relations University.

Special cultural programmes will feature the rich Filipino culture and heritage to the Russians and instill pride in the hearts of our kababayans in Russia who will witness the Bayanihan and the Philippine Madrigal Singers.

I look forward to finally meeting the members of the growing Filipino community in Russia.

This visit reaffirms the Philippines' strong commitment to build a robust and comprehensive partnership with Russia.

One that is based on shared interests, pragmatism, and mutual trust and respect.

[Geopolitical] realities and global developments require that nations like ours should have an agile foreign policy. While it is true that we value our long-standing partners, we must also be open to engage new ones.

For the longest time, we have placed key nations at the margins of our foreign policy, failing to fully explore the potentials of mutually beneficial

cooperation.

With our independent foreign policy, we can say with much optimism that these are new and promising times.

With hard work from both the Philippines and Russia, we can begin realizing the benefits of a partnership more than four decades in the making.

Thank you.

And I will be... I can take a few questions from the media.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Joseph Morong (GMA-7): Sir, good evening po. Joseph sa GMA-7. Sir, I'm sure with regard to --- with due respect Chief Albayalde, I've been --- I'm sure you've been apprised of what happened in the Senate investigation on the ninja cops and you've talked to both General Magalong and General Albayalde. First, may we know your thoughts about Chief Albayalde?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: I have many thoughts from both sources newspapers, gossips, tsismis, everything.

So nauna ang Senate. In obedience to the separation of powers and respect for each others' department, I should allow the Senate to complete its investigation. Then if it is sent to me, I do not have the investigators in my office. Ang tao ko lang sa Office of the --- aapat lang. Tatlong babae, isang major, dalawang lieutenants, and of course, my aides for the Army, Navy may isa ako. Iyan lang ang staff ko.

I do not do investigations. So the most proper thing to do, which is in line with procedural due process, is to await for the closure of the investigation by the Senate and when it is forwarded to me since it is under --- the police is under DILG. It's a bureau under Secretary Año. So I will forward it to him, give him specific period to complete his investigation. Not so short, not too long, but a period of time that is comfortable if he needs to call people. But all he has to do is to review. And if he needs to conduct altogether another investigation, he can do so.

We are not totally bound by the investigation of other departments. Though I would say that most of the testimony or declarations given in the Senate were under oath, I supposed that everybody was telling the truth there. So kaunting panahon 'yan.

But procedural due process must be followed. I cannot just wait for the Senate, its report, then adopt it as my own. Magkaiba 'yan.

Mr. Morong: Sir ---

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Walang sanction kasi ang Senate. But when I decide on the basis of the report of Secretary Año, I can dismiss, discharge, terminate any and all of them. So hintayin ko 'yan.

But we will be fair. There has to be... Alam mo ang PNP is not that bad. By and large, we have a very good PNP working for our country. Iyong scalawags diyan sa 'yung ninja cops have been there in Manila, one or two in Davao, and everywhere.

Iyong amin sa probinsiya natapos na namin. The ninja cops dito sa Greater Manila Area are known for their ferocity, viciousness and toxicity. I am sure the investigations will bare these things right.

Mr. Morong: Sir, how does... How do these things 'no, 'yung mga lumabas po sa Senate and then even 'yung mga information na nakarating sa inyo, how does this affect your confidence in General Albayalde in terms of leading the drug war which is one of the key programs of your administration?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Well, I would not preempt Secretary Año. But I leave it to him to decide. About the only thing was that if you really want to know, and this does not bind Secretary Año of what might be his conclusion, he was --- Albayalde was happened to be the provincial police director at that time. But 'yung ninja cops, that is his only... Well, if you say if you can...

If you have to insist that his only link there na 'yung mga tao na 'yon was -- - were under his command, up to that point. I don't know if Secretary Año would... I do not want to preempt. But I would say that this is not a brief for Albayalde.

But you know... If comes --- if it comes to a serious thing as dismissing a top official here and there, it has to be for a good reason and there must be enough proof.

Mr. Morong: So sir, we have not reached that maybe litmus test na you're prepared to probably let go of the Chief? We have not reached that point yet?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: No, I will ---

Mr. Morong: Wait for it?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Our emotions, our disappointments and anger do not come to play in investigations.

Año, I'm sure, would be in his proper equanimity when he begins the investigation.

Joyce Balancio (ABS-CBN): Good evening, Mr. President. Mr. President, what is your take or how are you taking 'yung proposed bill of US senators proposing for the ban of Philippine officials who are involved in the detention of Senator Leila de Lima?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: I have the best adjective for that pero at this time, I will just... Hilaw pa 'yan eh. At the --- hilaw pa 'yan. When it becomes ripe, then I will say my piece.

Ms. Balancio: But do you think sir it's a form of interference to --- ?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Hindi, hindi naman 'yan... These are the voices of members of a committee. And if that committee will report the resolution to the plenary and the plenary would adopt or join them, and that would be the act of Congress.

I do not deal individually with the congressman or senators there. Hindi pa hinog 'yan. It is not an act of state. It does not carry the mandate of the

entire Senate. So if there is one or two or three who says that these things exist in the Philippines, let them.

I cannot --- I cannot help them in their ignorance. So if they decide to report it out of the committee to the plenary for adoption and it becomes --- it is now ripe, it becomes a matter now between two states, then that is the time maybe the State Department or Trump and I will have to talk. And I will talk.

Ms. Balancio: Do you think sir it's proper also for the government to also ban these senators here in the country?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Wala pa naman sila eh. Those are proposals and proposals are what they are --- simply proposals.

Ms. Balancio: So you don't see any need for us to ban them as well?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: I said when the proper time comes. When it is ripe.

Ms. Balancio: Will you task the Secretary of Interior and Local Government to investigate on this regarding the two senators --- US senators?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: No. We will waste our time. Why would I waste my time investigating two --- ?

Ms. Balancio: Sir, on another topic. What is your reaction or how are you taking the recent reports on hazing?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Again, this is a subject of so many investigations -- - the police and the PMA hierarchy itself. Patapusin mo muna. Ang akin dito ga --- you know what?

'Wag mo akong tanungin kasi eventually the administrative case pupunta 'yan sa akin for final. Kung mag-reconsider --- motion for reconsideration, the final appeal administratively is to the Commander-in-Chief, ako.

So prudent would say or demand that I'll just keep it to myself. Whatever I know, newspapers lang 'yan, tsismis eh...

Ms. Balancio: But definitely sir we will act on this incident sir once it reaches your office? There will be new directives or commands from the Office of the President to address this issue?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Well, I would say that it would greatly depend on what is recommended. The PMA would have won administratively, and the police might have another, doon na lang.

Ms. Balancio: Do you want --- ?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Pagbigyan mo na.

Ms. Balancio: Sir, do you --- ?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Bukas pa naman tayo alis sa Russia eh.

Ms. Balancio: But sir, personally, do you want to eliminate hazing entirely in the country? Are you in favor? Or is even possible ba, sir?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Alam mo, ma'am, I don't know what but that is a permanent insanity sa mga ganun. Lahat kami dumaan ng... Me, I'd like to tell you, I was hospitalized for three days, massive hematoma. Then at one time, in our --- ako, si Justice [Bojie?] Santos ng Supreme Court, at saka si Bambit Mendoza, another classmate of mine, dalawa 'yan sila --- we wrote our fraternity and asked earnestly to do away with the physical. Wala rin eh. Hindi mo talaga maalis 'yan.

You know ikaw pumasok ka, 'pag nahuli ka, sorry ka. Hindi mo talaga matanggal 'yan, ma'am. Unless you ban fraternity for all time. Make it a criminal offense by joining a fraternity. But that would raise so many constitutional issues. Hindi mo talaga mapigilan 'yan.

Ms. Balancio: Would you ask sir the Congress to pass a law criminalizing hazing, sir?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Hazing, that's a --- carried too far. Tapos 'yan human degradation. 'Yang you --- you know 'yung, you allow, you order the plebs to --- the lower class to perform 'yang mga oral sex, ganun. That is --- hindi trabaho ng lalaki 'yan. 'Yang hiyain mo ang isang...

Ang tingin mo pagka ma-brod mo na, anong tingin mo sa kanya? Anong tingin niya sa iyo? That will create a lifetime animosity. 'Yang tamang-tama lang. 'Yang 'pag madala sa ospital, mabuhay. 'Wag naman 'yung mamatay.

Hindi mo maalís 'yan, noon pa 'yan. Santo Tomas hazing, sa amin, dito sa... Record kami tatlo in the years that --- starting sa 'yung generation ko. Prangka-prangka na, hindi mo maalís 'yan. 'Wag lang sumobra. Ayan sinobrahan mo.

You know, there are rules to follow. You break the rules, you go to jail. Ganun lang 'yan. Or you die. Those are simple matters in life.

But hazing? Hindi mo maalís 'yan.

Mr. Morong: Sir, sorry. As far as the 13 ninja cops are concerned sir, meron na pong resolution as far as --- as early as 2014. And apparently most of them are still in the service some may COP and then some are in the intel group. Nasa radar screen niyo po ba 'yung decision to dismiss ito pong 13 this early or do you still have to wait for the Senate investigation again?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: The man of the hour is Secretary Año when he gets hold of that. When it is already in his hands and within his authority to hear it and mete the proper punishment. Kanya ho 'yan. Then I review.

Mr. Morong: Thank you, sir. Have a safe flight.

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