

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE CEREMONIAL SIGNING OF THE GENERAL
APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2020**

[Delivered at the Rizal Hall in Malacañan Palace, Manila | 06 January 2020]

Kindly sit down. Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat.

I have here a prepared speech. I may or I may not read it for there is a more overriding matter that has to be taken up today.

May I just introduce 'yung the friends of the Filipino people. The Senate President Vicente Sotto III and the other honorable members of the Senate; House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano and the other members --- the honorable members of the House of Representatives; Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea and the other members of the Cabinet; Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps; fellow workers in government; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

Basahin ko na lang muna siguro. Nakakahiya naman sa gumawa nito. Pawis rin ito eh.

I am pleased to join you today as we welcome the New Year with hope --- much hope for the future of our nation.

The passage of the 2020 General Appropriations Act is proof that with the invaluable help of both Houses of Congress, this government can effectively work together towards the enactment of key legislative measures that will support our development agenda in the next two and a half years.

Representing almost 20 percent of our projected GDP for 2020, this year's 4.1 trillion budget will support our vision of a more peaceful and progressive Philippines --- an upper income middle --- peaceful and progressive Philippines --- an upper bracket of earners who can make a difference have already cut poverty rate by just 14 percent and achieved a 7.5 percent GDP growth [by] 2022.

As in previous years, we will continue to allot a great portion of the national

budget for infrastructure development and other social services – programs that will directly touch the lives of our people.

We will spend [36] percent of the budget to fund programs on education, healthcare, housing and social welfare.

To further boost our thriving economy, we will likewise invest 29 percent of the budget in infrastructure, tourism, trade, job generation, and agriculture.

We will also allocate 11 percent of the budget for debt servicing, with the ultimate goal of bringing down government debt to just 39 percent of the GDP by 2022.

Let me take this opportunity to thank Congress for supporting this administration's sound fiscal policies through the continued adoption of the Cash Budgeting System and the full implementation of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program.

I likewise recognize the invaluable contribution of the men and women of the Department of Budget and Management under the leadership of Secretary Avisado for their efforts in crafting this year's budget.

As we look forward to another productive year for this administration, I ask Congress and our civil society partners, as well as my fellow civil servants in the executive department, to remain driven towards our collective goal of providing a more comfortable life for our people.

Together, let us ensure that every peso in the budget will never be used to support the selfish greed of the few, but spent exclusively for the benefit and service of Filipino taxpayers.

Maraming salamat po. *[applause]*

I do not have to belabor the point. There is an evolving crisis somewhere. We do not know what would be the end result of this crisis. It could lead to a protracted war. It could be a wide-scale strife. But whatever it is, we Filipinos are really in great peril.

We have so many millions, nearing three I think, of Filipinos working mainly in the Middle East. Kinakabahan ako. Iran seems to be hell-bent on a retaliation, which I think will come. It's a matter of time.

There is much hurt and even the loss of pride of the Arabic world. And retaliation or the cry for blood is there.

Wala akong ano sa... I do not have anything, nary a worry, were it not for the fact there are a lot of Filipinos there. And it would take us a huge gargantuan effort just in case total breaks out of how to bring them back safely.

I called for the major commanders yesterday, Sunday. Yesterday afternoon I told them of the gravity of the situation and told them that they have to start even the deployment itself. It just cannot --- there is no such thing as a minimalist view here. It's fraught with danger. And I am afraid of the so many lives of our countrymen in jeopardy in that place.

So here you are. I was tinkering with the idea of calling a special session of Congress. Sonny Dominguez says we have unlimited funds *[laughter]* for that. No.

He says we had the money. If it spells the difference between the life and death of Filipinos, Sonny Dominguez says we have the money. We will buy, borrow, steal. Nakawan natin 'yang Central Bank mismo natin. *[laughter]*

If we have to do it, we will do it. But since you are all here my dear colleagues in government --- I was once a congressman --- we never had this kind of problem. It was all politics and who was going to be the next what. Iyon lang ang worry namin. But ngayon, I suggest that Congress even for about ano lang --- bahala kayong one or two days discuss the problems, the ramifications. But I don't know where you want to put the money.

Ako, ayaw ko. But if there's a thing that would need on standby, that I can -- that the government can get immediately, source it from where so that we can use the money immediately. This has to cut across accounting rules and all of that, I said ako, ayaw ko. We might want to place it in the hands of a committee kasi ayaw ko 'yung magkwenta-kwenta ako pagkatapos with that huge amount --- I do not want to be bothered with that kind of...

We need billions there, standby lang. And calculate what would be the --- the calibrated withdrawals. First, in places where it is really very dangerous. For example... Well, lahat.

You know, if Iran poised to strike, it will not strike Iraq because as it is Iraq is already in a sorry state. Maybe Iran, rather, would go for a more bloody nose.

And there's only one there. It could be Saudi Arabia. Striking Iraq would not --- it would not make anything out of it. Ang problema is there is two countries that are really --- which is the apple of the eye of the Iranians --- it's the Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Kung ayan ang mangyari, then we have a trouble because most of our OFW are stationed --- majority of them are in Saudi Arabia. So... I am not as bright as the others. Those with strategic minds might want to do it for us. Let's start with a standby fund.

I said everybody, it's not only you, it's only... I'm very allergic to how the money is spent. I do not want to hold it. We might want to get some of the men with integrity and probity and they can be the disbursing body there.

But as long as there is money... What I am interested that there is money. Who spends it? Congress can put the safeguards, the roadblocks there to avoid corruption. Alam mo 'pag ganito malaking pera at saka mabilisan ang pasa, there's bound to be some, you know --- I hate to say this but that's always the case.

And that is why today projects are not implemented. You know why? One of the reasons really is takot ang mga tao, mga opisyal down, to embark on projects. Why? Not all, some. Ayaw masisira ang career nila especially those nearing the finish line, about to retire. Ayaw nang gumalaw 'pag may mga pera-pera kasi takot.

You have a bureaucracy who is sometimes corrupt. And a bureaucracy who's timid, who's very extra cautious and that is why the projects are not implemented even down the line. Gusto ko lang malaman ninyo na ganon ang istorya. But it's not all because everybody wants to get hold of the money.

Some, kagaya ko, ayaw ko because I do not want to make accountings. I mean I can handle the job but I... the last --- the least of the thing I do is that 'yung aspersions about corruption and all of this.

I would rather that you have the power to do it. If you really want to do it, you create a committee and make an oversight kaagad --- a congressional oversight so that everything will be okay.

But we need the money, Sonny. I need it within the next --- before it actually starts.

And there's another thing there. I do not think the Hormuz Strait and the narrow road there is capable of protecting Filipino sailors.

Every now and then, though in small numbers, you hear a lot of Filipinos being... Well, most of them are eventually freed but some are killed, a few of them. We do not have any protection in that part of the earth. At one time, when there was about six Filipinos, I threatened to send a frigate of our Philippine Navy to patrol the international waters before entering the sea of Hormuz.

And same. We have to show to the people everywhere that we cannot be --- we cannot be the f***** whipping boy in this part of the... Kaya ako sabi ko mag --- if I send and you see the pirates, never mind about human rights. That's b****s****. You blast them to death. Any pirate there that you find. That's what --- that's what I ordered the Philippine Navy in the southern part of our country.

Do not waste your time or do not... If you have a bleeding heart, get out. I need men who will kill because today that is really the mantra: Kill, kill, kill, kill. They kill every --- whatever for whatever reason.

They blow churches, they blow mosques. There's nothing sacred anymore. So they blow crowds. They blow congregations and all. I... It's about time that we wake up from this long stupor of...

I know Christianity is a very passive... But you cannot eat it and still be healthy. Never mind about the priests. They cannot help us. In our hour of need, it is only the Filipino people. No --- without meaning to offend anybody.

It is ours and ours alone. And they have to stop treating us like doormats or s****. They have to stop it. And for the remaining two years of my term, I will not. Be it the Communist Party, be it the terrorists, be it the drug lords. I am sorry for them.

Let us talk after my term. Let us talk where they will me --- they would hang me. I'd be glad to. After all, it's only once. And remember not all people die because of hanging. Other people die because of sickness.

So actually when you die of hypertension, there's no purpose in it. But if you die for your countrymen, it's time to be great.

Thank you. *[applause]*

--- END ---