

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**DEPARTURE STATEMENT
OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
FOR HIS OFFICIAL VISITS TO
THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND
THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN**

[Delivered at Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 2 | 2 September 2018]

Kindly sit down. Thank you.

You know, I was told that I cannot entertain media questions because we are running late. But because you are here beautiful ladies, we can have until four o'clock this afternoon.

Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea; Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano; members of the Secre --- Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra and the other members of the Cabinet; Senator Richard Gordon; honorable members of the House of Representatives; Manila International Airport Authority General Manager Eddie Monreal; Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte; 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; fellow workers of government; mga kababayan.

I leave today for landmark visits that underscore our vision for our country – a responsible member of the world community – a Philippines that is a friend to all, an enemy to no one.

Upon [the] invitation of the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, I shall undertake an Official Visit to Israel from September 2 to 5.

I don't know if it is mentioned in the letter. We have about 28,000 Filipinos in Israel and there are 48,000 Filipinos in Jordan. And you know, without mentioning anything, there's a volatile situation there and we have to be sure that our citizens are fully protected.

My schedule will be full. I shall seek to reaffirm the ties between our peoples made more significant by a meaningful shared history.

At the same time, I shall seek to have a robust relationship that looks forward to broader cooperation on a broad range of mutually important areas – defense and security, law enforcement, economic development, trade [and] investments and labor.

Upon the invitation of His Majesty King Abdullah II, I shall likewise undertake an Official Visit to the Kingdom of Jordan from September 5 to 8.

The agenda is promising, as I seek to renew relations with a country and people which have the common aspirations.

Certainly, I look forward to discussing ways [of] advancing cooperation in the key areas of improving defense and security, sustaining growth, addressing transnational crime, intensifying trade and investments and enhancing labor cooperation.

I shall seek to fully maximize economic cooperation and realize trade potential with both Israel and Jordan.

A business delegation from different sectors of the Philippine economy will be there in order to explore the diverse trade and investment opportunities that makes Jordan and Israel more tempting to offer.

Of course, we will invite their business leaders to look at our own rich market potential.

With more than two million Filipinos [working] in that region, I intend to emphasize the great importance that the Philippines attaches to maintaining peace and stability in the region.

In my meeting with the Filipino communities, I shall renew my pledge to do my utmost to bring the change we desire in our country, in ourselves as a people. I will ask them to continue to be our partners for growth, progress and change.

In these Official Visits, I shall continue to be guided by my mandate to uphold and protect the national interests of the Philippines.

The Philippines shares with all countries the desire for a stable and secure world.

In our efforts to strengthen the bonds of friendship and amity with our partners around the world, we shall be guided by our Constitution and laws as well as our international commitments in support of efforts and initiatives, including the two-state solution, towards the attainment of just and lasting peace.

Salamat po. I can maybe --- you do not waste my time. I do not want to disappoint your time so I can have one or two. Secretary if...

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: I can't hear you. Why don't you just stand beside me?

Q: Good afternoon po, President. Cliezl Pardilla po from PTV-4. Isinusulong po ni Agriculture Secretary Manny Piñol na gawing legal po o pa-dokumentuhan po 'yung mga smuggled rice na ipinapasok po sa Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu, at Tawi-Tawi. Ano po 'yung take po natin doon?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Well, those smuggled rice have not paid any taxes or tariff or whatever.

So they are confiscated at disposal of the government and maybe I shall distribute it for free or go down to the last prices --- prevailing market prices.

Q: So, President, pabor po kayo na i-legalize 'yung smuggled rice?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: *[Hindi, hindi ko makuha 'yung...]*

PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON HARRY ROQUE JR.: Kung pabor ka po Mr. President doon sa sinabi ni Secretary Piñol na i-legalize 'yung smuggled rice?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: No, I'm... The smuggling itself? No, of course not. That would be destructive to the economy.

You'd put down on the market in turmoil. Smuggled rice unrestrained, that would promote disorder in this country.

Maybe we can import and lose. I-import natin, ipagbili natin at a price that... Malulugi tayo. Pero we'll peg it at the price that the Filipino can afford.

We can lose but not allow smuggling in this country. That's the other way around. Mag-import tayo tapos magpa-lugi na lang. At least meron tayong benchmark kung magkano ang maubos -- - ang pera natin.

Q: Hi, sir. Genalyn Kabiling from Manila Bulletin. Sir, there are calls to --- for Agriculture Secretary Piñol and the NFA officials to resign due their alleged incompetence over the rice crisis. What's your take on this, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: You know, all officials including me are bound by laws on the matter --- rice, whatever it is. There are laws to be followed.

Maybe the laws are weak or unenforceable. All we have to do is to improve on those laws, not necessarily fire people.

Hintayin na lang ninyo because October, I think Bello is going to run for senator. There's no need to fire him. Just wait September, October.

And I don't see any serious offense there. We have not really lost anything except that there's a --- aberration in the market.

Now, I'm just warning the traders, lalo na ang tiyan ng Pilipino. Do not force me to resort to emergency measure. Because if you do that and time is very limited, I will not allow Filipinos to go hungry.

And if there's an artificial scheme going around --- I don't care if it's really the forces of the market that would agri --- impact on...

Pero kung may nakita ako na hoarding, kalokohan, I will not hesitate to exercise the powers of the President and I will ask the military and the police to raid your warehouses, bodegas. And I will just get your --- subject of course to just compensation.

I can do that and if, I said, you force me, I will.

PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON ROQUE: Thank you, Mr. President. Due to lack of time, thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, thank you Mr. President.

PRESIDENT DUTERTE: Salamat kaninyong tanan.

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