

Presidential Communications Operations Office

Presidential News Desk

SPEECH OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE DURING THE BUSINESS FORUM

[Delivered at Intercontinental Hotel, Jordan | 6 September 2018]

Kindly sit down and thank you for your courtesy.

His Excellency Muhannad Shehadeh, State Minister for Investment Affairs; Her Social --- Her Excellency Hala Lattouf, Minister of Social Development; Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano; Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea; Trade and Industry Secretary... cabinet --- Ramon Lopez; Philippine Ambassador to Jordan Akmad Sakkam; our friends from the Philippine and Jordan business community; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

I... There's about two pages of my speech. Too short to deliver my message. We are in a world of commerce and industry. And as part of humanity, we are all agreed that we want to live in a world that is peaceful. Much as we desire, there are things which we have to cope up in this area.

In our humanity, we want food for everybody, clean water and environment that is still working to this day. All of these things are aspirations which no individual or nation can claim exclusivity.

We have to work as a team. We have to reach out to people for better understanding. The connectivity that is desired for commerce and work would include human resource, either as talent or whatever manual work available and we would like to treat our fellowmen just like our citizens --- the same protection, the same degree of treatment as a human being.

And we want to avoid conflicts. We want to avoid wars. We do not want crazy people in government of the respective countries. But to our chagrin, there are a lot of them and we're trying to fend off almost in every continent.

There are some flashpoints which might lead to war. That we are afraid and that's why we go out of our way to make peace and to talk to people.

My country is relatively young. We gained our independence from the Spaniards and the Americans. The Spaniards for 400 years and under the Americans for 50 years.

We were colonized for so long that along the way, we lost our identity as a race belonging to the Malay. Like Indonesia, which was also conquered by the Dutch, and of course Malaysia and Brunei by the British.

All of these things are water under the bridge. But it makes us doubly hard to cope up changing our own culture because of the interference of colonial rule. What is true in Asia is true here in the Middle East. And that is because in Asia they were in search for spice, for everything that is foreign and of maybe, the mining industry grew by leaps and bounds during the American time.

But as a feudal state of Spain, we probably endured 400 years. And it's not easy to forget. But we don't nurture hurts. We do not take revenge. We just go on with our lives and try to build a nation for the next and the next and the next, until Allah wishes to end it all. So... [applause] My grandmother belongs to the Maranao tribe where the siege happened. And she was a Maranao. And that is why I --- along the way, I had a choice of so many religions. But one day I concluded, why I got quarreled with the priests and the bishops and all.

And I said: Well, I only have one God. I do not know about yours. But maybe, just maybe, one day we'll realize that God is for all, not for a select few, not for priests, not for the palaces that they have, not for the bishops, but for every Filipino and every citizen in this country. Be they Islam or Roman Catholic or Protestant.

There's a war going on in Mindanao. Used to be a issue of territoriality. Why? Well because when Spain came to invade the country for 400 years, they arbitrarily included some of the Malay [places?] which belong to the Kingdom of the --- I will try to recall as fast as I can --- the Sri Visayas Empire of the Malay.

And of course, the ownership of these territories could generate issues of [unclear].

But of recent memory now, we are coping with something which is universal, which is not peculiar to Asia, not peculiar to the Middle East and not peculiar to the Westerners.

And some of them imported terrorism to their own places. Why? Well that they can explain to us maybe someday. But as we try to go on with our lives, it brings us together. All men of goodwill and who are really decent and honest enough to admit that this is a world --- a world which is not always fair.

Life can never be fair. But at least we try to understand each other. Now for those who understand each other, we connect. We offer our facilities. We have good schools in the Philippines, medicine. A lot of our Indian brothers are there, everywhere, studying medicines.

And we have some well-meaning friends from the Middle East who are there. Arabs. And they do business. And so this is a forum which I have just a few things to say because the Prince is also waiting for me.

The concern of every businessman, be the Arab, Americans, British or whatever, they go out of their country with their capital. Build enterprises hoping that it will succeed and provide employment and profit.

No businessman today would go to business if there is no profit. That you have to assume that he is there to make money. And I am here to assure everybody, all of our Jordanian friends. But if [garbled] I'd like to thank the King, your government, your people for inviting me to be here this afternoon.

Second is that, we have a lot of Filipino in good numbers and they are here to make a living because things are pretty hard up. And Philippines is somewhat the third largest producer of babies everywhere. We are hitting the 110 million Filipinos and it keeps growing everyday.

And because of some religious disputes, family planning, in whatever form is always taboo to --- sorry to say this in public --- by the Roman Catholic Church.

And so for other religious people, we cannot really control them because it would be at the expense of the religious hierarchy. But then again, I have been openly advocating for it ever since I was mayor.

I was mayor in my city for 23 years. I was **a** member of Congress, a vice mayor. And I have been there for almost... By the time I should have completed my presidency, I would have served my government for 40 years.

And so I'm here because we want to make friends with the Jordanians. That is the very essence of my visit.

And if I can convince some of you to try the Philippines to do business, I am pretty sure that one of the things that you would like to demand, if you have to invest millions or billions, is that, "Is there peace and order in your place?"

Second is that, "Are we guaranteed of our return of our investments?" Third is that, "Can we depend on your talent, your manpower?"

In all of these questions, "Is the active labor front?" "Yes." And because some leftovers of the communist who are no longer [here?] but they are still surviving a few of them, insurgency in my country.

In Mindanao, it used to be a territorial because they were the ones... Islam came to Mindanao by almost 70 to 80 years.

When Magellan landed in the Philippines, some 500 or so ago, years, they brought with them the armaments, the muskets, the cannons which were really very foreign to our forebears.

And so everything was captured easily. But the problem is, this is not something which we can openly boast of the history of our...

Because in the book it says, "Who discovered the Philippines?" Right in **our** history books of our government, of our schools, it says "Magellan." And well, when I was young, I used to accept that proposition that some Westerners discovered the Philippines.

To my chagrin, I now say that they came to disturb us, not to conquer us, because we were there since the history of mankind, since Adam and Eve.

And that is why there are the leftovers of the claims of territory, not fairly divided among the Muslims who were there in the first place, well ahead of Magellan in his trip which was sponsored by the King of Spain, King Philip. And that is why it's called Philippines.

Because Magellan who discovered the Philippines, so they say, in their history book, I hope it is now done in Europe but not in my... I will one day order the statement be stricken out of our books and our history documents.

The Philippines was there. The Arab missionaries came from the south --- well from Asia, then down to Malaysia, Sing --- Indonesia, Brunei then eventually went up the Philippines. That is the history of the Philippines.

So there's the squabble, territorial. But I said of late, we have been disturbed by the coming of the ISIS. Not of territory, not for anything else but a history so corrupt that the ideology is only one to kill and destroy.

And that is why, leaders of men of goodwill invite each other to talk about it. I do not want to kill any Arab or a Muslim or Filipino-Muslim for that matter. My grandmother is a Muslim.

So please, I'm just trying to come here to just tell you all about it. So if there's trouble, I cannot say that it is trouble-free but that is down south going back to Indonesia and Malaysia.

Philippines, most of the part central, central Phili --- Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao, relatively it's peaceful. Business can thrive there. And if you say a place where there's law and order, I would say, "Yes." My answer would be, "Yes."

Now, "Is the national government capable of accepting and embracing foreign money?" I would say, "Yes, on all counts." We need investments. We need the money to finance the huge population --- education, medical care, everything.

So we need help. Help in terms of business where you can make your profit. If you go there and try to discover things. And if there's a thing that is capable of making you succeed in business in my country, I will invite you. But there is one thing which I would like to guarantee you.

Maybe you've heard some other time about the Philippines being corrupt. Yes, most of them in the past. But I tell you know, I give you the solemn commitment that if you go there, it will be business with ease.

And as a matter of fact, you do not have to travel from one place to another to get a permit or clearance wherever.

I will create a department just to receive your application. We will do the processing. We will give you a list, a shopping list of what to produce.

If everything is in order, there's no need for you to follow it up. We will advise you that your papers have been approved and that you can start your business. And there will be a roadmap there, it's a map where you can --- it's color-coded. See whether it's good for mining here, it's good for agriculture, fishing.

And we have many talents. We have an excess of talents. But Filipinos are really brighter than the colonials. I don't have to name them but they were colonials just the same.

And maybe they can come here learn from you or we can also help learn and then pass it to the young people of Jordanian.

I will guarantee you the return of profit. There will be no corruption. And if you ask anything, even a toothpick, I will guarantee you, you can have my audience anytime of the day or night. *[applause]*

And I can call the guy in front of you. But if I shoot him, you just walk away. Leave me with the police to talk about these things.

I hate corruption. I have been a prosecutor for almost --- I was a trial lawyer for almost a little over nine years before I became mayor. And it explains my penchant of being --- running things the tough and tight way.

This is only when you have to be in this kind of behavior or at least your paradigm that you can set things right for your country. No question about it. You go to business, yes. "Are you assured of your life that you will live?" "Yes."

I was about to ask... "You can bring in your family?" "Yes." If you have families, yes. You can bring them too, along with you.

So the thing is in business is that business wants to thrive unmolested, undisturbed by government. The least interference that government does over the business community, the better for all.

So we are... We passed a law, ease in doing business.

But if you do not want to... Well, Manila is a crowded city. You have your commercial attachés. But if you need help in your papers, we can run the papers. And from time to time, just give me your address so that we will call you and say, "Hey, there's one thing."

But it would not be a repetitious thing. Just like what you would ask from a foreigner investing in this country, we're just about the same. You have the environment and then you have the public works, if there are any objection of the building and so on and so forth.

Well, all of these things will be above board. And I said, I do not want --- do not talk to anybody about money, asking money from you.

I will give you the privilege. If some idiot starts to talk about bribery, slap him twice --- for your country and your effort in going there and for my country also because I am put to shame. *[applause]*

Two slaps would be good. And let me know. You have many friends here, Filipinos who are having businesses here. I said this is not a joke we're trying to *[garbled]* it. But you can have my audience anytime, especially if it is a matter of a complaint about corruption.

I cannot and will not stand for it. And if I cannot control corruption, if I cannot control everything that is there, having been elected for almost about three years coming past them, it's either I can control things or I resign as President and give it to somebody who can do it. *[applause]*

Me, I'm just trying to be of help and one of the few countries that I've been to --- this one is Jordan because this is not really to --- and go into patronizing but you know that our countrymen are very satisfied how they are being treated here, just like in Israel. They do not have complaints at all.

And they said that maybe you can help us extend. I said, "Yeah, if you want to stay here permanently, just... There are plenty of Arab bachelors there around. You can get married and have children and a Filipino and Jordanian blood mixed." They mix well.

I was introduced to one. A lady who has a Jordanian father and a Filipina. And she's more beautiful than a Filipina. More fair than the average Jordanian hot male.

So with that, I leave you my goodwill and if you happened to be in Manila, they call it --- I do not call it a palace, but it is known to be Malacañan Palace. That is a building built by the Spaniards where the governor generals of Spain used to stay.

I do not stay there. I cross the river Pasig everyday to a little house near the military camp who's responsible for my safety.

Malacañan is historical. We can have coffee, lunch or dinner. Whatever appeals to you.

And of course, I said, I'll leave you my guarantee that we will be friends and we will nurse and

nurture it fully so that someday my people can really say that you paved the way for the good relationship.

If there is anything that we can do, if you are short of your army, let me know. One hundred ten million. How much o how --- You need one battalion? Two, three, four, five? I'll send them to you.

So no problem. I will commit my government in the right side of history. The right side of history is that you are fair and that you can understand the problems of humanity and that you realize that you need as much as I need you in order to [work?] this place called Earth, beautiful and working for all of us.

Thank you very much.

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