

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF  
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE  
DURING THE 122ND PHILIPPINE ARMY (PA) FOUNDING  
ANNIVERSARY**

[Delivered at the Philippine Army Officers Club House, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City | 21 March 2019]

Kindly sit down.

National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana; Social Welfare and Development Secretary Rolando Bautista; National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon and other members of the Cabinet; nandito po si OPAPP at si ating Secretary sa --- Spokesman --- Galvez and si... Tumingin ka nga dito Sal Panelo --- Secretary Panelo. *[applause]* Lieutenant General -- General Benjamin Madrigal Jr.; Lieutenant General Macairog Alberto; the officers, enlisted personnel and civilian employees of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen

I am pleased to join you today as we celebrate this [122<sup>nd</sup> Founding] Anniversary of the Philippine Army.

I congratulate our brave men and women in uniform for this significant milestone in the organization. Indeed, your accomplishments in both internal security and civil-military operations in many parts of the country are a testament to your unwavering commitment to defend our institutions and our democratic way of life.

Through unrelenting efforts, you have successfully conducted more than [550,000] operations resulting in the recovery of almost 6,000 firearms, the neutralization of more than 600 families of the state --- ah enemies rather I'm sorry, it's because of my eyes, mistake --- the surrender and capture and apprehension of more than 1,700 lawless elements.

May these gains inspire you, our valiant soldiers, to never waver in your commitment to perform your duties. Intensify our focused military operations against communist terrorist groups so that, alongside our [civil-military] operations, we may persuade more of their members to surrender and return to the folds of the law.

May I just deviate from this speech, prepared one. I am officially announcing the permanent termination of our talks between the Government Panel and the Communist Party of the Philippines. *[applause]* I'd like to announce that I am no longer entertaining any interventions or maybe persuasions in this democratic state of the Republic of the Philippines. My sense is that you can maybe talk to the next president of this Republic one day.

It is, indeed, very important to engage stakeholders and communities in combatting insurgency and preventing the spread of extremist ideologies, and I believe that empowering Indigenous Peoples and others in this regard is the key to this fight.

You know I have to date distributed something like one --- 60,000 hectares to land beneficiaries. I mean the only way to make the issue of communism and you know of commonality of things is that you make them irrelevant. And sinasabi ko naman sa komunista hindi naman kayo ang marunong mag-distribute ng lupa. I have been at it actually ever since I became President. And fortunately I do it in such a way that I do not bring any publicity with me.

Kung minsan pumupunta ako ng gabi. For example like Boracay, there were many speculations about what government would intend to do after the rehabilitation of the beach and the sea itself. There are many speculations about giving it to gambling, casinos and everything. I just kept quiet.

But when the completion was done by the Secretary of Tourism, si Berna, si Roy Cimatu, pati si Ed Año sa local government, I immediately declared the land behind the beach area as a land reform area. Lahat ng lupa sa Boracay sa likod now belongs to the Aetas, to the natives. Ibinigay ko lahat sa kanila. *[applause]*

And so I was also in Sagay and there was this shooting incident if you may remember actually about two months ago. Itong mga komunista was quick to blame that it was done by the military. Always ganun eh. Iyon ang paano nila.

So alam ko na sila 'yon. That they were just fighting for the possession. It's not only other people are land grabbers. Communists are. So 'yung mga asosasyon nila amongst the inner group. Iyong mga manggagawa na walang ginagawa.

Then they try to fish out the lands that they would give to the people. Iyong nangyari doon was they were depriving the original tenants there because they wanted the association to control the distribution. And that is why my orders and those was made possible because of this --- the lousy job done by Secretary Mariano of the DAR, 'yung okupasyon.

And so every available vacant lot that they would come upon, they tried to just go ahead and occupy it. And I had to give the warning that if you do that I will order the soldiers and the police to shoot you; and to shoot you dead.

Huwag kayong mang-agaw. At itong lahat ng lupa sa --- I have three years to go. I will give all government lands to all the people of ---Filipino --- sa mahirap. Iyan ang --- that was my commitment during the campaign. One of the most important and I remember. Ginagawa ko. I am into land reform.

The problem is, 'yung mga --- tapos na ang land reform eh. But the problem is, 'yung mga original owners by some fiat or whatever strategy, they kept on resisting the occupation of the lands by the awardees, the tenants.

And so my orders there was just to put them into possession. That's the law. We cannot avoid it. It's not my law, it's a law of Corazon Aquino.

Ang sabi ko ilagay ninyo talaga ang tao diyan. And so those warring factions there were part of the awardees when I went to Sagay, nighttime. I did not bring any, I said, nobody from the media. I just wanted to work simply sans the publicity because I find it very corny for me to be announcing the things that I do because there is no need for it.

I am really paid by government to do exactly what I am doing. I do not need the publicity of anybody. Whether I like it or not, I have to do it because it is my duty to implement the law.

With your untiring loyalty to the flag and to the overwhelming support of our people, I have no doubt that we will win the war against those who seek to sow terror in our communities, especially in the countryside.

As your Commander-in-Chief, I assure you of your government's unwavering commitment to improve your capabilities through the Second Horizon of the Revised AFP Modernization Program, which we intend to implement until 2022.

I'd like to say something about --- but I would come out as a braggadocio. I'm just worried I said... I'd like to call upon the soldiers and the police. I do --- I do not know what is tomorrow. I am not saying that I'm the only one capable. There are a lot of us --- we share the responsibility of governance.

Me, just keeping order, by just on paper working on the things that --- where we should govern most effectively.

Meron lang akong konting kasi --- I do not... Well, it leaves a bad taste in the mouth but I said I do not know who would be the next president.

I... I'd like to see somebody in the horizon and until now I'm searching. And I said that if we are not sure of what the tomorrow is, since you already have this, tapusin na natin ito. I'd like to finish this war, both ano – Abu Sayyaf pati komunista and the drug problem in about three years.

God willing, we'd be able maybe just not really completely eradicate it but reduce the activities or the illegal trade and the fighting to the barest minimum.

Hindi ko kasi alam kung sino ang nakikita ko na --- kaya medyo nandito na rin ako at may konting panahon pa naman. Tapusin na natin 'to para... *[applause]*

And I'm not saying that I'm the only one I said. It's really --- all would depend on you guys. The thing is the manner in which 'yung how to make it --- make a representation to the public.

Because I guarantee you, under my term, I have said I assume full responsibility for all that would happen as a consequence of enforcing the

law, whether against the criminals, the drugs traffickers or the rebels who would want to destroy government.

This administration will likewise continue to promote your welfare and that of your families through housing programs such as the four-storey Enlisted Personnel Condominium and the [six] unit condominium building for married senior army officers which we just completed this month. We target to complete by June another five condominium buildings for the senior army officers and their families.

I assure you that we will continue to pursue these programs as an expression of the Filipino people's appreciation for all that you have done for our country. Indeed, we are all truly indebted to you for risking life and limb for love of country.

It is with gratitude that I say this to you. *[applause]* And with the firm commitment and solidarity in this important fight, I have no doubt that we will be able to combat those who seek to undermine the gains of our Republic.

Together, let us keep our communities and our nation safe, secure and peaceful for the sake of this country and of our children and of our fellow Filipinos.

Let's do it. Tapusin na natin ito lahat para sa ating bayan.

Thank you. *[applause]*

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