

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE DURING THE OATH-TAKING OF THE
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS (NCCA) OFFICIALS
AND PRESENTATION OF THE 12TH ANI NG DANGAL AWARDEES**
[Delivered at Rizal Hall, Malacañan Palace | 26 February 2020]

Kindly sit down. Salamat po.

Late ako kasi ang Pasig nag --- hindi ako maka-lantsa. I commute --- lantsa. Mababa 'yung tubig to go around.

The Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea and other members of the Cabinet; officials and members of the National Commission for Culture and Arts led by Chairman Arsenio "Nick" Lizaso; others --- or the winners of the 12th [Ani] ng Dangal awards; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

Alam mo, matanda na. Mahirap magbasa ha. Medyo distanya 'yun. Hindi masyado malapit. Ilapit mo, dodoble. Ilayo mo, wala ka nang makita. *[laughter]* Setenta y cuatro na po ako.

I am pleased to join the artistic community in the Philippines as we honor the distinguished Filipino artists who have won global recognition in the various fields of arts and culture in the previous year.

Our [awardees] today represent the best of what the Filipino can be, and what the arts can do to uplift the whole nation through talent, vision and excellence. Our rich culture and arts reflect and define the Filipino people's national identity and the values, which are vital to nation building.

In this 12th Ani ng Dangal, 52 awardees will be honored, including the dancers, the singers, the musicians, the literary writers, film directors and performers, [architects], and visual [artists] and designers, including the multi-disciplinary artists.

The whole nation, listening now, is grateful for your achievements. You have made us very proud to be Filipino. You did not only put the Philippines on the world map but also contributed to greater understanding, respect, appreciation of cultural diversity.

The Filipino narrative that you creatively portray in your artistic expressions reflects the indomitable spirit of our people and the glorious history of our nation. I thus enjoin each one of you to continuously promote Filipino cultural heritage here and abroad.

I also want to extend my welcome and congratulations to the new Board of Commissioners of the NCCA and its Executive Council Members.

I am confident that you will continuously demonstrate your voluntary support for the further development of Philippine culture and arts and the preservation of the Filipino heritage.

May you continue to uphold Filipino values and continuously work towards the development of Filipino culture and the arts, which is vital to the creation of an enlightened nation.

Bago ako mag --- mag-singit lang ako. Likewise, over and above all these things, values, down from generations to generations. We are all concentrated to uphold the dignity of the Filipino people.

I'd like now for the first time discuss with you the reason why I withdrew from the Visiting Forces Agreement. Well, every day in the newspapers and in the halls of the Senate of the United States, we were being portrayed as a Republic incapable of administering simple justice.

Araw-araw 'yan and sad to say, the other political party used it at sumakay itong left. And they were able to penetrate. Some of them already employed in the US Congress as employees, maybe those who are really permanent residents there, leaning to the left.

But when the Senate --- I don't know if it was the appropriation or whatever --- placed in the colatilla doon sa mga aid-aid na ibigay na tayo, being portrayed as [incapable?] of in --- investigating extrajudicial killing. But most of all, we were pictured to have persecuted --- not prosecuted --- persecuted and committed a grave injustice to a certain person. I'm referring to De Lima.

On my oath of office, I never tinkered with... That's not my style because ako po prosecutor and I know the pitfalls of really tinkering with justice. I have been a trial prosecutor for nine years before I became a vice mayor, mayor, then in 1988, tuloy-tuloy na po ako.

At with a little sense of pride, sabihin ko sa inyo, hindi ako natalo ng eleksyon. But more than that, we really --- you were all present and it was evolving. At alam man niyo and you could --- you could even, just in the early days say whether it was really a good case or not.

Alam mo, they were demanding that we release De Lima. Alam mo si De Lima, dumaan ng imbestigasyon and the investigation was even brought in court, to the Supreme Court, to decide whether or not everything was in order. And the Supreme Court said it is.

Ang problema nitong Amerikano, they kept on hammering and demanding the release and then threatening na 'yung mga Filipino officials in government who were one way or another connected with the case, whether as a investigator or as a prosecutor and even the Supreme Court which rendered an opinion on a certain point of the case.

Lahat... Hindi naman sinabi. Not in so many words. But said that they will cancel or deny entry.

Ako naman bilang isang Presidente, 'yung kay --- set aside kay De Lima. I said on --- upon my oath of office, totoo 'yan.

Itong extrajudicial killing sinasabi nila noon 30, then 70, now it's 27. They do not have the accurate numbers. But let me unburden your heart. Ako 'yun. Ako 'yun. I take full legal responsibility. And if there's somebody who will be executed or put in prison, ako 'yun.

Ang mga police pati military, hindi 'yan kasali. In the ladder of authority, I am their Commander in Chief at sinagot ko lahat 'yan.

But let me just state the basis. 'Yung ano lang. Bakit ganun? Kayabangan? Do I have to do it? Presidente na. Anong... When I was mayor, I was administering the affairs of the city. What more could I ask from God that dagdagan ko pa ng kayabangan?

Alam mo ho it was a matter of a call to duty. Kasi po binabaha na tayo ng droga. And the --- some time during the term of Mr. Marcos, Secretary Alunan who was then the DILG went to the States. He was called by the DEA and that's the Drug Enforcement Agency of the United States.

Sinabi sa kanya, "Your country is about to fall apart with drugs." Alam nila na 'yung mga mayor - -- 'yung namatay na mga mayor. "Your country is going narcopolitics in a few years." Buhay 'yan si Alunan. Tanungin niyo kung siya ang nagpatawag kaming lahat ng mayor dito sa Malacañan. Dito. Kaharap ko, sinabi niya. And he told us that he will hold us responsible as mayors in the matter of controlling crime and the massive proliferation of drugs.

Ako naman I was just a newly elected mayor and I made a deal --- unitary. Hindi ako nag-ano 'cause I made a deal with everybody. I said to the criminals, "Go out of the city because I'm going to build one place that would be comfortable for everybody."

At sa mga durugista sinabi ko talaga. And I admit without any excuses, I said, "Huwag mong sirain ang bayan ko. P***** i** mo papatayin kita." When I became President, I said the same thing.

You know until now. Look at the crawlers --- 'yung crawlers 'yung sa TV. 'Yung tumatakbo na linya diyan. Every day... Yesterday, I lost a policeman again. It's really a war sa drugs. Just like [Sinaloa] of Mexico. There's no government there. Ang cartel ang magsasabi kung sino ang maging mayor and until now ganun sa Mexico.

Sabi ko, kung ako ang mag-presidente, hindi ako papayag nun. Maraming --- nag-warning na ako. Tinawag ko rin 'yung mga mayor dito at huwag nila akong sisihin. Sinabi ko, "If you go into drugs, tapos ka." Then I called the governors here. Sinirahan ko para walang makinig, para walang mapahiya. Sinabi ko ganun rin.

You know, it's all part of the dignity of our people na basta-basta ganunin na lang... And I was forced to come up with a Spartan style of governance. 'Yung hindi naniwala, namatay. Admitahin ko, ako 'yun. I was the one who said, "I will kill you." You know...

But all of these things... It's not hubris, sabi ko. Hindi ako kailangan magyabang. Presidente na ako. Mayor ako noon. And I said in Davao I will build a city that would be comfortable to the Filipino.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like you to visit Davao. Kung nagpunta na kayo ng Davao, you can walk around 24 hours a day and I guarantee you, nobody but nobody would molest you. Kaya 'yan ang --- 'yan ang... That's the back, the flip side of the story.

It was all my desire to make my country peaceful and my desire since I was a prosecutor talagang ganun. Why would I allow the criminals to take charge of the mobility of the people at night or day na hindi sila makapasyal sa sarili nilang bayan?

The standard I gave to the police simple lang. Ask your wife and daughter to walk around Davao City, in all of the places, itong sinasabi nila na delikado. 'Pag umuwi 'yan unmolested, that walking around free, unbridled, undisturbed. And that is the kind of...

Bakit ko --- why would I allow the criminals to rule the streets? 'Yan hindi ko maintindihan. Eh fiscal ako. Bakit ko payagan na ang kriminal ang maglalakad diyan at ang inosenteng mga trabahante, mga babae, those working at night ang mabibiktima?

'Pag ginalaw, hahanapin talaga kita. Pagka ganon, lalo na 'yung mga taga-bangko. Minsan may nangyari. Well... 'Di bale, I assure you he will pay and he paid. Wala ako...

Sabi ko, I will restore your right to use the streets. I will free your mind from fear. Kaya po ako siguro hindi natalo. It was 10 elections all in all, excluding the presidency. Baka 'yan.

Now, I am being made to answer. Yeah, I will answer. My answer is it's all about the dignity of my countrymen, of not being a victim, not being mobbed at 'yung sa ano --- sa Senate.

Sabi ko, if you think that we are a bunch of criminals or if you think that the President is a killer, which you are right. If you think that I am --- that I am not a murderer. Lahat ng tao 'pag inipit mo. I can be everything but not with the malice in the mind [when I?...]... Tapos na 'yan.

There has to --- there is no malice. It was just a statement of my --- being the mayor and the President. Kaya kung hindi ko na natiis, sinasabi nila ganun, then 'yung visa... Sabi ko naman during the early days of my... When I had a tiff with Obama, namura ko si Obama.

Sinabi ko talaga. They asked a hypothetical question. "If you are invited to the United States, will you go?" "No." And the same question was repeated many years after. My answer still no. Hindi ako pupunta doon.

As a matter of principle, ayaw ko. Kaya 'yung ginawa ko nabigla lahat. Not even the Executive Secretary. Not even General Año, DILG. Walang nakaalam. Basta sinabi ko na lang. Sinabi ko lang --- ang tanong ko lang sa Armed Forces, "Mabubuhay ba tayo kung wala ang Amerika? Can we fight the wars that we are...?"

Sabi nila... Ganito 'yan eh. I will end this by just [pricking?] your... Tayo, isang bayan. Sa Republic of the Philippines, do you need a powerful country --- the most powerful country at that --- United States of...? Do we need America to survive as a nation? Do we need America now to fight a rebellion in our entire country? Do we need their arms?

Eh 'yung hawak-hawak ng mga rebelde, eh ninakaw lang nila 'yan sa mga sundalong pinatay nila. So I ask this question. I pose this question. Kailangan ba natin ang Amerika? The mighty -- - the might and power of the military of the --- of the United States to fight our rebellion here and the terrorists in down south and control drugs?

We are doing it. Sila maraming mga sophisticated intelligence, gadgets. Tayo wala, mano-mano lang ito. So, but we are doing it. And the military and police said, "Sir, kaya natin." So sabi ko... Kasi 'pag hindi natin kaya, we have no business being a Republic. You might as well choose.

We can be a territory of the Americans or we can be a province of China. Kung hindi natin kaya. Ganun lang, insurrection. Kailangan mo ang Amerika?

So, 'yan ang --- such that the flip side of everything. "Ito si Duterte..." Magsabi sila na knee-jerk reaction. I am the most deliberate. That's why I sleep until almost --- I'm awake until six o'clock in the morning, just thinking of what I have to do in the following day. Walang...

You can --- hindi mo pwede laruan ang Republika ng Pilipinas with a knee-jerk reaction. It's always what is good for our country and for our...

Itong droga, talagang papatayin ko 'to. I --- I hope that the next 12 years would be critical. Uubusin ko talaga itong mga p***** i*** 'to.

Alam mo, pagka hindi, ipasa mo sa next generation eh. And they are just --- 'yan... They are not miles away. They are not a distant star in our contemporary life. They are just there in the corner.

'Pag itong mga congressman... 'Pag ako namatay, the next generation will take over. And if they have to contend para sa anak nila, kawawa.

Hindi --- I'm not trying to be a --- I'm not into heroics. Pero hindi ko alam kung talagang makaya nila kasi kung ako, sa utak ko, mahihirapan ako. Sino kaya ang susunod na...? 'Yun lang iniisip ko.

Apo ko, simple lang 'pag... No big talk. Well, my grandchildren, they are now 11, started with one. I was only one, then I married, then I separated, then I married again. Ngayon, 13 na ang ano ko --- 12.

Biro mo, papaano 'yan? 'Yung iba 24, 25. What will happen to them? What will happen if they cannot --- hindi nila kakayanin? 'Yan lang ang [silbi?] ko.

Wala na tayong pinag-usapan na mga patriotism, na... 'Yung apo ko lang. Kawawa naman. Kung kaya ubusin nila, I hope that somebody will also one day rise and just slash the heads of...

But me, you might call me brutal. Alam mo naman kung hindi ako naging abogado, hindi ako naging Presidente, baka gun-for-hire rin ako, lalaban sa mga droga.

Maraming salamat po. *[applause]*

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