

Presidential Communications Operations Office

Presidential News Desk

SPEECH OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE
CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY

[Delivered at PAF Multi-Purpose Gymnasium, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City | 21
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Thank you. Sit down. Thank you for the courtesy.

National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and the other members of the Cabinet; AFP Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Benjamin Madrigal; outgoing Commanding General of the Philippine Air Force Lieutenant General Galileo Gerard Kintanar; the new Commanding General, Lieutenant General Rozzano Briguez; major service commanders; officers, enlisted personnel, and civilian employees of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

Today is a milestone in the history of the Armed Forces as we celebrate Lieutenant General Galileo Gerard Kintanar's successful tour of duty as Commanding General of the Armed --- of the Philippine Air Force.

Upon assuming command, General Kintanar has been steadfast in accomplishing the Air Force's mission, especially in the efforts to fight insurgency and terrorism.

Under his able leadership, PAF achieved thousands of flight hours, performed thousands of sorties, ferried almost 160[,000] passengers and airlifted more than 160[,000] pounds of cargo all in support of our territorial defense and security operations.

Under his watch, the Philippine Air Force [worked] with other units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and other agencies, which resulted in the surrender [or] arrest of terrorists, the recovery of their firearms, the dismantling of a drug laboratory, the arrest of many drug personalities, and the recovery of millions worth of illegal drugs.

During his tenure, General Kintanar has proven his commitment to duty as highlighted by his valuable contributions in ensuring security during the rehabilitation of Marawi, as well as the humanitarian and relief assistance during typhoons, disasters throughout the year.

All these attest to the exemplary leadership of General Kintanar and the collaborative efforts of the valiant men and women of the Philippine Air Force. This has earned them the highest rating of 'Excellent' in the whole AFP during the Annual General Inspection conducted by the Office of the AFP Inspector General. Palakpakan nato [applause] kay excellent gud.

General Kintanar, your accomplishments speak well of how you fulfilled your promise to the Philippine Air Force and your duties to the Filipino people. As you hand over the responsibilities of the command to your successor, Lieutenant General Rozzano Briguez, you can be assured that the Air Force you will leave is one that is stronger and more empowered.

General Briguez, know that we will constantly face threats and challenges as we realize our aspiration for real change and lasting peace. I trust that you will continue the Air Force's advancement through reforms and modernization programs that will transform the organization into one that is responsive to national security and development and a credible external defense force.

It is important to engage all stockholders --- stakeholders rather and communities in fighting insurgency and the spread of extremist ideologies.

I therefore ask our troops to support the leadership of General Briguez and to continue performing your duties well as [we] intensify our focused military operations against the communist terrorists, alongside civil-military operations to encourage more members of the communist terrorist groups to surrender.

The Filipino people are truly grateful for your service and sacrifice, which have preserved the peace and defended the freedoms we enjoy today. I continue to ask for your unwavering support so that today, I can say that we have created a safer and more secure and truly [progressive] nation for our children.

General Kintanar and General Briguez, mabuhay kayo at mabuhay ang Philippine Air Force. [applause]

And may I be allowed to just add? This is not mine. This was prepared by somebody else. I'm just reading it. But I'd like to communicate my intentions, my plans, my worries, my headache in running the country.

You know there's a little bit of a ruckus there in Congress regarding the abolition or the continuance of the road user's tax --- board. I believe that the Senate has decided the right thing and has stated that the road tax --- board has been dismantled.

Ever since I assumed office, I've always been wary about this office because it has been the milking cow of people who are corrupt in government. Ever since, I've really questioned the existence of this office. It's nothing but a depository of money and for corruption. Walang ibang purpose 'yan.

And I agree with the others and the senators that it is time to abolish it and return that function to the DPWH. I side with the Senate.

And if it comes to a constitutional controversy, the Executive department will side with the Philippine Senate and its interpretation of the law that the process has been completed; that it has been sent to the Senate for approval and on time it was signed. This is in the matter of abolishing the road tax. Huwag na lang natin --- you know, I've always been...

Early on, sinabi ko na sa kanila, ayaw ko talaga 'yan. But you know politics and the expediency of everything, nandiyan pa 'yan hanggang ngayon.

And I had a talk with president Arroyo and apparently there was a misunderstanding because all along I really wanted to abolish the road tax. And Andaya says now that I --- was one of those who said that it should be maintained. No, nagkamali sila doon.

My feelings about that board is --- was at the strongest against its being there. Kasi walang ginawa 'yan kung hindi ma-corrupt. And I see now that it's about time na buwagin nila 'yan because if not and if I side, which I am on the side of the Senate, it would create another constitutional issue and maybe crisis.

Huwag lang sana. I hate to say it but please if it's good for the people, it's good for the trust repositied on the people on government employees, better just go ahead and abolish it.

The second is... Alam mo tandaan ninyo 'to when --- mawala, mawala rin ako. In three years' time, I will step down. Do not entertain claims of me perpetuating in office or toying with the Constitution. I do not have that plans and I will not stay a minute longer. I am as --- I am in a hurry as anybody else na umalis na ako diyan sa trabaho ko. Pagod na rin ako.

But when I am --- wala na ako diyan. Remember, this country cannot move forward for our children and the next three or four generation if we cannot have the law and order in this country, if we cannot destroy the Communist Party of the Philippines. If we cannot stop the drug --- the widespread problem of drugs, it will result in a dysfunctional society. Believe me. And you will long remember me for that.

And the second is corruption. Unless there is a complete stop of robbing government and the people of their money, walang mangyari talaga sa buhay natin. And so I'm talking now of the retirement of General Kintanar.

Alam mo, it is now in the Supreme Court --- in Congress after the Supreme Court. I believe that they are crafting a law which says that the levy money, 'yung coconut levy should be returned to the farmers.

I'm telling you now, as one of those na meron rin kaming konting coconut farm, it would be nigh well impossible to trace those people, who they are and where they are now and whether or not they were really legitimate tenants or just an ordinary guy there in the barangay working for some odd jobs in places where coconut industry was thriving.

But I think Congress will insist on that and it's about 87 billion. And you add the interest now, it's going to go up something like 100 billion plus. Now if it is through --- coursed to the Philippine coconut board...

This is not to you know --- nothing about prejudice or prejudgment. I am not comfortable with all the people in that agency for historically, it has also been plagued with corruption. So I have asked them to tender resignation as a matter of courtesy.

And I want somebody --- kailangan ko ng tao na talagang above the rest of the crowd. Taong malinis kasi bilyon 'yan. Huwag sanang mawala. At kung hindi man lang maibigay doon sa mga tao na karapat-dapat maghawak sa pera, then you might as well reserve that money for the future generation of farmers.

Kaya sinasabi ko when we were conferring in the Cabinet and I was looking for a candidate to be the chairman who should be someone na talagang maasahan ko na walang mawala maski piso. And I have observed him. We are not a --- we're casual lang. I do not know General Kintanar but I chose him to be the chairman of that board. [applause]

I don't know him. I know that he's a general who chose to retire early. And that is really no cause to worry. It's just a few months. But sabi ko na, "Kailangan ko ng tao and I am eyeing you."

So when the time comes and if I can get the mechanisms of how the money will be distributed to the beneficiaries and if I look for somebody na talagang makita ko na ang pera ng Pilipino hindi mawawala, it should be the retired General Kintanar. [applause]

Hindi ko na lang habain. Tapos nabasa ko naman 'yung speech na hindi akin. Nasabi ko na ang gusto ko. I chose this time. I told general. Sabi ko, "Would you mind if I make the announcement? It is not premature because the post there is vacant. And if you don't get out from there, I can fire you anytime and I'll replace you."

So I believe that the courtesy resignations are there. And maybe I will just ask him to help me. He can choose the people he wants to serve doon sa Coconut Authority.

And ang akin lang naman is ito lang eh. All I need, all I require, all I desire, all that I dream of is that people joining me in government: isa, he must be utterly honest and second that he is competent. Kaya niya ang trabaho niya.

Palagay ko pa naman 'yang eroplano niya kalaki-laki ng y*** na 'yan. Maghirap 'yan. Ikaw... Ano --- ledger lang man pati journal. All you have to do is just to keep an eye

and just at the end of the day, kwentahin mo lang 'yan. Look at the papers and see to it that the Filipino is protected.

Maraming salamat po.

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