

Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk

**SPEECH OF  
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE  
DURING HIS ATTENDANCE TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP  
MEETING OF THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION,  
INC. (PMAAAI)**

[Delivered at the Reception Hall of the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City  
| 21 January 2020]

Salamat po. Kindly sit down.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and other members of the Cabinet; Senator Bong Go; Senator Ronald dela Rosa; AFP Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Felimon Santos and other major service commanders; members of the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association led by its chairman Rufo de Veyra; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen

It is not everyday that one is given the opportunity to talk before a gathering of this kind, especially at this time when there is so much to talk about. For that opportunity given to me, thank you very much.

Those who passed through the storied halls and hallowed grounds of the Philippine Military Academy share a common bond, the depth and sense of which cannot be fully understood by those who have not lived in its quarters, marched in its drill sites and undergone the traditional rites of manhood. That bond can only be expressed in one word: “MISTAH.”

There is much mystique hidden in that word. It is more than friendship. It is more than camaraderie. It is a feeling and a sense of pride that only a PMA graduate can fully comprehend and appreciate.

Years and years of Philippine Military Academy history as well as the individual careers and fate of its graduates are embedded in that word. That is why its sacredness to a PMA graduate cannot be doubted. Its sanctity cannot be challenged.

To an outsider like me, “MISTAH” is synonymous with honor, discipline, competence and loyalty. These are values that make for a soldier and a gentleman.

It is said that to be called MISTAH is the highest compliment that can ever be extended to a PMAer by his peers.

The career of a PMA graduate does not end when he retires from military service. To a PMAer, “retirement is not the end but merely a bend in the road.” His duty to country and people never ends. It is enduring. His retirement from military service simply means that his life has entered a second phase that for all we know, can be more consuming and demanding than the first.

Whether or not that second phase caters to tasks and functions aligned with public governance or to purely private matters, is not the point though. What matters is that the wealth of talent, expertise and experience that every [PMA] alumnus commands, is not wasted but kept in reserve for the nation's beneficial use at the proper time.

And this is where your association, the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association, assumes relevancy.

We cannot overemphasize the influence and moral ascendancy that your alumni officers bear on the cadets and graduates of your Alma Mater.

Prudence dictates that you keep track of your members' whereabouts, their career changes and their activities that impact on public service and public welfare.

The image of both the Philippine Military Academy and the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association, Inc. is only as good as the image that each one of you projects to the public.

One scalawag among you can destroy or dent the image and reputation of every PMAer, your Alma Mater and your association included.

It takes only one fly to spoil a feast. It takes only one scandal to ruin your avowed moral and ethical standards.

Make use of your moral ascendancy. Police your own ranks. You owe it to the academy that nourished you. Indeed there is much you can do to help this country.

You can pause for a while and look around.

You see PMAers holding fort in local government units, in both houses of Congress, in numerous departments and agencies of the executive branch of government. All you have to do is to look. Governors, mayors, congressmen, senators, department secretaries, heads of agencies – PMAers all. You see them in private corporations and other business entities. They are everywhere.

True it is that there is reason for a PMAer to be proud – proud of his Mistahs, proud of his Alma Mater, proud of the Alumni Association, proud of himself. There is ample reason to beat the breast, so to speak.

But there is also reason to fear and a cause to forebode.

That pride, if uncontrolled, can easily degenerate into arrogance. And from there, the path to abuse opens. And after that, only God knows [what].

That is what you should guard against. That is what you should not allow to happen. I am confident though that steps shall be taken by you, if you have not done so yet, to address this worry.

On that note, I end this short message.

Thank you, for giving once again to me the opportunity to speak my mind. Salamat po.

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