

**Presidential Communications Office**

**Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH  
OF  
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE  
DURING THE INDUCTION OF THE NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE FEDERATION OF  
INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE (PHILS) INC. (FICCI)**

[Delivered at Rizal Hall, Malacañan Palace | 20 February 2018]

Kindly sit down. Salamat po sa... Thank you for the courtesy.

His Excellency Jaideep Mazumdar, Indian Ambassador to the Philippines; Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea and other members of the Cabinet; Senator Miguel Zubiri, sir, huwag kang mag-bow-bow diyan *[laughter and applause]*; Rex Daryanani, President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce Philippines Inc.; the Board of Directors and members of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce Philippines Inc.; other guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I am 72 years old. If I don't use... I hate to wear it but I should be wearing it.

Now, they prepared for me three pages. *[laughter]* And I know that you've been waiting since about an hour ago.

I'm sorry but I was having a meeting with the ambassador of America and one CIA who gave me a briefing.

I will not give you just a... I'd be through in about one hour, 50 minutes; one minute, 50 seconds. *[laughter]* And it would not really be as complete as I would like to give it to you because I have to say something from the heart.

Let us start by our familiarity. Me and Bingbong, we come from Davao City. Long ago it was a frontier town. It was... It's not like Davao now. It's so big, huge. But it was a small --- just a thriving small city, one big road of Claveria and San Pedro and the --- where the Indian --- our friends. We grew up with them. The Balchand eventually became a Jesuit. He was very bright. He was from Ateneo de Davao.

And there used to be a program of the Ford Foundation of the United States. They sponsored oratorical --- oratory all over the world. And the first champion in that event was a Filipino-Indian. He's a priest, I think. *[Buhay pa ba si ano?]*

Very old. Yeah. Somebody told me that he's there in --- it's a... He's very old. It's a place where some kind of a departure area for --- you know. He's very old but he's still alive, Balchand. And he was the first... He was the first winner for the Voice of Democracy contest.

And we had two from Davao about so many years later after him. It was Sonny Dominguez. He's also one guy who won the --- national, all over the Philippines. Me, I just won running around doing nothing.

So we have these friends, the Balchands. And I do not remember now the name of the In --- Filidian Bazaar. And they were the malls of yesterday. If you want quality things, cosmetics, t-shirt, the Banlon --- they call it. Before you can only buy it in Davao in the stores of the Indian -- - big ones --- Big Chief Bazaar.

Lila Department Store and that was owned by the Balchands of Davao. They are still there. Pribhu is still... I used to see him almost once a week during my mayorship days. I don't know about the sisters.

So we grew up with an Indian friends because we went to the same school. Para kaming magkapatid, almost like sisters and brothers. We were just a few folks during that time, 1950. Eh nauna pa ako kay Bingbong eh. He came later. At Balchand was about two years ahead of us.

And I enjoyed the company of the Indians and I still enjoy your company. As a matter of fact, I went to India recently and mutually we assured our citizens that we will treat them equally and protect each other and govern with the same compassionate race that is --- sinabi nga ni Sonny --- India is a very compassionate race.

So we now talk about why we are here. Most of you are here because you are in business. And in this world of big business now, most of you or some of you are already in --- in the Philippines, even in the construction business. There's a new application from an Indian company.

India is also interested to enter into the telecom industry. And we are considering... I invited them during my talks with the businessmen of India during my official visit.

Unfortunately, at that time it was still cold. Talagang malamig. And even if you put off the air-conditioned rooms, the cold would still penetrate the... Except for the weather, I had a very great time.

The food was a little bit like the Bicolanos. Puro sili ah... *[laughter]* The... Literally eat the...

Well, anyway, let me just be frank with you. We are happy that you are here. As a matter of fact, in my city alone, we have about almost 500 or 2,000 young people studying. Most of them in the Mindanao Foundation, it's actually a school for doctors.

So there are so many of them and there are also some enterprising Indians who come here and, you know, give the students a rough time about the space, the apartments and all, and closing time. So I had to intervene. And I had to tell the guy, you know, you just follow the standard of fairness --- not only in the Philippines but in your country.

And do not, you know... Like for example, getting the things of the room when there's a delay in the payment. You do not do that. I said, "do not throw his things outside of the house because that is not the usual practice". And even in your... I'm sure that is not allowed.

So there are the times that I have to intervene because I have to intervene for the welfare of any people, not only Indians but all.

Now, if you are here in business, my concern is... You have the capital, you have the will, you have the determination to make it good, to be billionaires, you have the money, but my concern is to make it very simple for you to deal with government.

One is corruption. And it has been there for quite a time. You know, you do not know me. I'm just an ordinary mayor of Davao City. It's at the tip of Mindanao, on the left side, if you face the

map, if you are in Luzon. It's on the left side. There's a --- facing Indonesia and Australia. And if you have a very good eyesight on a clear day, you can see the Australian women there wearing bikini in the beaches. *[laughter]*

That's where my city is. And the problem is, having said that, I am just a probinsyano or one who comes from a rural area.

Well good, but the criticism is also --- says that I am not a statesman. I'm a lawyer so there was no subject about statesmanship so I never learned to be one.

Second is I have a bad mouth. The problem is, my paradigm never shifted from being a mayor to a president. So my dialect, my language sometimes can be bad, and sometimes it could be good if --- it goes with the temper of a person.

And because I've been mayor in so many problems of the city, I usually do it the way a mayor should do it. He will just say, "son of a --- stop it." That's what... The mayor does not go to Congress everyday and declare what you want to do.

And that's why some say that I have a vulgar mouth. True. I came from the --- down there in the --- just beside the canals. So that's why my language is not good.

The worse is that we have... Growing up in Davao was a melting pot. All tribes are there. So we grew up to learn Tagalog, my native Bisaya and Ilonggo.

So that sometimes when I talk in a dialect, Tagalog, I seem to forget the word for its counterpart translation of...

I would say Tagalog and then I would say, "p\*\*\*, anong Tagalog nito?" And usually they would supply the answer, but minsan in the Visayan, Congressman Zubiri will tell you, if I'm talking in the Visayan, because of the so many dialects that we have to absorb, nagsasalita ako, "ano nga 'yung Bisaya nitong y\*\*\* na ito?" Y\*\*\* is devil. There's always that --- it's a native talent.

Just like, "where's that son --- son of a..." When you're looking for something, "where's that son... where's that pen that I've, son of a..." *[laughter]*

We also have the translation for that in Tagalog. "Saan na 'yung... Saan 'yung p\*\*\*\*... Saan na 'yung, saan 'yung... Sinong pangalan nun?" In the Visayas, ganun... "hain?" where, "hain man si...?" looking for a neighbor. "Y\*\*\* na..." Y\*\*\* is devil.

So those are the things that I express because it's all --- the cobwebs of my mind. So ganun ako magsalita because ganun --- ganun ako eh.

Mayor at the same time maybe by accident --- the accidental president and that would be me. Alam naman ninyo 'yan, the history.

Nobody in a party, I didn't even have a barangay captain here. But I won by a landslide in the...

So I'm now governing. You are in business. I just would want to tell you that as much as possible, we want you to be comfortable.

There's an ease of doing business and I am here your President, whether you're a national because I am the President here.

And I am telling you that I would want to cut red tape. A department, usually Department of Environment, DENR, or whatever, Trade and Industry, it used to take you two --- to one year, two years.

I am only giving my department secretaries one month and the directors two weeks.

And if they do not comply with that, then we talk and we go separate ways.

And I said, "I do not want corruption. I've been mayor for 23 years in Davao. You can get your permit in three days. I do not want people queuing.

That's why I said that they stand in a long line but, you know, there are things which I have to correct along the way being the President.

There are so many mistakes that abound but I am trying to correct it. But those mistakes that are really connected with graft and corruption is something which I do not like.

And I have fired so many Cabinet members in so short a time and for those people even those traveling using public funds going abroad as if they were using their own money. Sometimes 22 times, 19 times, that's why I said...

Now, they said, "Duterte does not give a reason." There's a column there about the pain of being --- because I do not want to hurt you. There are people whose children are already doctors and lawyers so why do I have to, you know, unless I want really to humiliate you or ask you to give back what you stole, I would just whisper, I would tell the Secretary of --- the Executive Secretary, "just whisper to him, 'go'." No noise, no nothing.

And so even the Secretary of this Malacañan, the Budget officer. I hate to announce it but I just said to him, "you go."

And that is why I am still in the process of transforming government.

You know, when I was campaigning, I did not have the money, you know that. I did not have the crowd. In the city of Manila, in the island of Luzon, I only had Imee Marcos, Abet of --- Abet Garcia of Bataan. And that was it.

Then I had... Even in Cebu where my father came from. And in his hometown, even my cousins were for the other candidate.

But in Cebu I won by a landslide. In Mindanao, well, there was no doubt that I'd win in Mindanao.

So I just made three promises: stop corruption; do not --- stop drugs; I will talk to the rebels on all fronts; and I will improve the economy by just allowing the managers of the economy to do it.

Give them enough elbowroom to talk. I do not interfere. Absolutely. You can ask anybody, any clerk in any department.

There are no papers of commercial contracts, constructions, MRT or whatever it is, electric, technology. You only deal with the secretary.

No commercial transactions or contracts with the government ever reaches my table. I do not allow it.

It behooves upon the Secretary to just sign it if it's okay, then do not sign it if it's not okay, then just give me the reason if I ask. If at all that... There's an instance here, what was the --- your rationale? What was this thing? You know, just say, well --- and I would accept it. I have trust in every --- in each and every one of them.

So if you have a problem with government, I have opened up the third frequency for telecommunication, telecoms.

If you are the representative there, you can always go to them and discuss business. But if you are asked to shell out money or there is a transaction which involves corruption for a favor or for a permit then let me know.

Unless you are ready to give it then just shut up because it's yours. But you are not supposed to spend for anything unless it's part of the official fees and the collections of government, regulatory fees most of it.

So there's a new guy there, he was my dorm mate. His room was in front of me, together with -- - he was with Secretary Bello. We were all students.

So they are not from Manila, they are not the bright peoples from... But they were students of law.

Dulay, who is the BIR, studied in Ateneo. I was studying in San Beda. Then Bebot Bello, the Labor Secretary, studied in Ateneo. They were classmates with Dulay.

And the other one, was [*imitates Yasay*] you know, he's the member of the --- Secretary of Justice. The one who got a disqualifying mark from the Commission on Appointments because he was always talking in English. [*laughter*] And there was a thing about his being a dual citizenship and he never informed anybody that he was also an American. And even when he's talking in our Cabinet, I could not make out what he was saying. Yasay.

But when his appointment was due for the Commission, there was a... And I could understand it. He was an activist kasi.

So right after the Bar, we took the same --- Class '72. He was with UP, Padre Faura. He was hunted together with Ernesto Maceda.

So they decided to apply for a status of being refugees and were granted by the Americans. So he had no travel documents at all.

So in any of his sorties, because he was a professor of law in Hawaii, in --- he was using a travel document, not really a passport.

So but when he... He was actually already applying for an American citizenship at that time. But when he came here to work, the problem is he had these doubts about his citizenship.

When he was facing the Commission of Appointments of Congress, it's a congressmen and senators a --- it's a combined where they pass judgment on your qualification if you are a member of the Cabinet or judges of the Supreme Court. You have to undergo the crucible, the -- - everything there --- your private and public life. So it was there that his citizenship came into a doubt. And he was not confirmed.

But all others, they are good. And you can always go to them, seek an audience. But if you are not satisfied, if it involves corruption, asking for money, you can go to your friend, Daryanani, and just tell me about it.

And the reason why there is always a brouhaha about transaction is --- I'm repeating it again to all of my countrymen and, of course, businessmen here who are from --- if you have a complaint regarding corruption, let me know at any time of the day or night and I will give you access and I will give you the time and space to talk to you.

And that is what happened with that Korean. He was complaining that he was still not allowed to deliver there --- to perfect the contract about the frigate.

So when he came here to... I said, he was referred to a lawyer to explain about... And that will happen the same thing for anybody, rich or poor, millionaire or just an ordinary businessman or professor, you can come to me if somebody asks money from you.

And there are really two main offices which I have already cleaned. It's the Customs. Customs is handled by a general who used to be my chief of police in Davao, Sid Lapena. And the other, I said, is the BIR.

These are the two agencies of government usually the subject of complaints of extortion activities. BIR.

You pay the right taxes, get your receipt and do not worry about anybody auditing you or making an accounting on you.

If somebody goes there on the pretext of examining you, open it up. As long as you pay the right taxes, just the exact price, no more no less, then you are freed of any interventions or trouble. That is the assurance that I will give you.

Everybody will be protected and I will go after those persons in government who are still into corruption.

Wala kayong problema. Malacañan is open. Just like that Korean, he's a subject of a hearing in Congress for nothing. Because we really --- and I have been saying, you can go here and complain and I will meet you and I will have that officer called in front of you and we will hang him in this chandelier. *[laughter and applause]*

I am good with the Armed Forces but I still have to institute continuing reforms with the police. And the police has always been a problem. But they are not that many. There are scoundrels, scalawags in every organization.

And that is why the PNP now who's supposed to retire on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April and because he enjoys my trust and confidence, I will extend his term for a little bit longer. *[applause]* So enough to --- reforms to get hold.

I do not... This is the first time. I'm sure the Executive Secretary who will be signing it is --- surprised. Because I was reviewing last night the --- that's what I do.

I do not read contracts, that's not my business. But I was reading the state of affairs and I said I have to... I would need somebody still to continue with the reforms.

So General Dela Rosa, he's popularly called "Bato," will have an extended term.

The Army is smooth and I will judge when the time comes also of whether or not I will give extensions to the others.

But until the reforms get hold, I would still need the services of these guys now present in their present position. So that is one.

The other one is labor. Well, it's a topsy-turvy turn because, you know, it's a democracy.

Labor unions are allowed and you can always deal with the collecting bargaining agreement if it's a big business but we are always ready to help you. Bebot Bello is a good negotiator. We can always lend our hand for that.

And for... Well, you do not have a worry about overseas workers. The ban of skilled workers to Kuwait stands.

I'm not ready to lift it now. I was outraged by what happened there. And until I'm sure that everything... We will have to come up with a[n] agreement that would be complete.

Like passports taken by the employer, no day off. They are only allowed to sleep almost four hours, three hours, and sometimes their meals are garbage.

So these are the things that have to be sorted out before I will agree to deploy Filipinos outside.

Problem is there are constructions that have stopped building and everything and even in my place Davao because we have lost our skilled workers.

I mean when you try give some elec... No, putting up things like these, you just go --- you cannot just go out of there in --- in my office and ask someone, *[whistles]* "you have no work then you fix that."

You will burn the whole place. Or the plumbing. You must --- they are trained but they are all in the Middle East. So we do not have the workers now.

We are trying to entice them to come back to the shores --- back to our shores to... You know, Philippines is growing a little bit --- moving faster than usual.

So the plumbers, the guy who must know how to build the pipes there because if you get one from just anywhere there, when you flush the toilet, the water will go up *[laughter]* and not go down the drain.

So these are the things which should have... There's a dearth of skilled workers. And it's because of the many years of hardships, they were forced to migrate to other places.

So my main worry actually is to make you comfortable. Now, you are susceptible to threats of extortion.

If it's from the government, let me know, whether Labor or everything. And if he's correct, I will sustain him in your presence. I would say, "yes, I think this guy is correct."

But if he's wrong or if it is intentionally done to have money, you can be very sure he goes quietly into the night. You don't have to worry about filing cases, that's a tedious business.

So I would want again to assure you that we are here to invite you, to protect you. And I said, just do the right thing, pay the right taxes and you are freed.

That is now me talking to you. I am giving you that commitment. But let me know if it was... If you don't then I cannot help you simply because I would not want --- I would not... I won't... I can do nothing. I won't do anything because I cannot reach you out from where you are.

But let my aide and --- or you can come there and just tell the guard that you have this problem and you want to complain.

I will urge you to really do that. The only way that you should avoid... The only way that you should not be doing is entertaining also corruption.

At the end of the day, you will lose more money, more asking, but if you resist and demand only what is right and correct, and if you are still molested, disturbed, let me know and I will put an end to what ails this country --- corruption. *[applause]*

So that is it. And if there's anything that you want government to do which you think is a must and I believe that you have submitted a position paper.

I will look into it. I have not seen it yet --- just yet. But rest assured tomorrow or tonight, I have --- when I left there was already bonds of papers to be signed.

That's the problem including the military. Because when the General here retires or goes up, everybody goes up. So another appointment. This one goes up one position higher, another appointment, so another bunch of papers, and another.

So he brings the whole of the Army down to the top and you have to read what is this guy, what is his qualification and then you have to sign the appointment. That is the...

But contracts, MRT, railway, I have always ordered that it should not be endorsed to me for approval.

Only the Secretaries, using his judgment, using his best --- the best of his --- the gray matter between the ears, the due diligence that an official should do before signing contracts.

So I'm happy that we understand, I suppose each other along this line, especially corruption.

And well, the pace of your business goes with the traffic. We'll just have to wait, we are doing everything we can.

China is helping us and everybody is helping us. And India is interested also in helping us.

Prime Minister Modi has been very good. He said, "anything that we can do to help you, let me know."

And India is a promising country. The human resource itself is its --- is the asset. And you are competing with China in terms of growth. Then the projection is you will make it to the top within the next decade. So congratulations. *[applause]*

Indians are hard working and very good. And you do not have that air of --- just like, you know, you go to other places, you talk in English and said, "Can you tell me where's the building here?"

*[garbles]* No, I'm sorry I do not talk in French. I'm just asking where I can find the *[garbles]*  
*[laughter]*

Here, we Orientals, we respect strangers. You can go anywhere. And if you talk --- Indians speak good English. They have this British accent and it's good for you. We understand each other.

Aside from our own native dialect, we have this talent of talking in English. That's one great asset which the others do not have.



So once again I'd like to thank you for honoring me with this kind of visit. I'm sure you are hungry. The fork is still there in its place, not yet moved. Meaning to say, we will have dinner.

So bon appétit and thank you for your attention. *[applause]*

**---END---**