

## **Presidential Communications Operations Office**

### **Presidential News Desk**

#### **SPEECH OF**

#### **PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE**

#### **DURING THE APPRECIATION DINNER FOR FORMER PRESIDENT AND HOUSE SPEAKER GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO**

[Delivered at the Maynila Ballroom, Manila Hotel, Manila | 09 July 2019]

Kindly sit down. Salamat po.

Former President and House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; the honorable members of the House of Representatives; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen

It is my pleasure to honor tonight a true living icon in Philippine politics and an embodiment of strong political will, no other than former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, ma'am. *[applause]*

Perhaps no other chief executive in our history comes close to President Arroyo's example of carrying out decisive actions even if such actions would prove to be unpopular. Indeed, her intuitive and hands-on leadership has carried our nation forward, especially during trying times.

Indeed, President Arroyo's extensive experience as a renowned economist and academic was crucial in laying down the foundations of our country's steady economic growth during her term, the effects of which are still felt today and **will be** felt in the years ahead.

During her impressive 27-year career in the legislative and executive branches of government, she became a major figure and was instrumental in crafting policies that made our bullish economy possible.

Serving in various capacities, she crossed party lines and worked with various sectors in order to implement legislation that improved our people's welfare, brought decentralized development to the poor and

marginalized constituencies, and instituted significant fiscal reforms that have sustained our nation for almost three decades. *[applause]*

I have always held President Arroyo in high esteem for her inspiring and disciplined leadership, not only for my presidency --- presidency, but the rest of the public as well.

Medyo mag-cut ako dito. All of the --- my dealings with my president during my mayorship days eh trabaho lang ho 'yon, ma'am. And I said you are hard to deal with at nagagalit. At naiintindihan ho namin lahat, ako, especially during... If I may just mention it in passing without being specific, the number of times that you called me in the wee hours of the morning just to listen to me and to seek my advice.

I was there when you made the decision, one major crucial. And since you did not follow me, I said... Well, and also the other week or two weeks ago, we had a party sponsored by --- I don't know if it was Inday or somebody else --- or somebody else's honor, but we were there and I was made to choose the speaker.

Sabi ko na, "No, I am not prepared to embark on something which I will regret later kasi puro ko kayo kaibigan." So I... So I really just *[garbled]*, "Do not bug me with that. I suppose you can settle the matter by and among yourselves."

As they keep on bugging me, in exasperation I said... And they were ready, ready, ready to follow that night by impulse na ganun *[snaps fingers]*. O `di sige, sabi ko, "We will ask the Speaker, Speaker Arroyo to choose who among you."

Tapos nung sinabi nila, "Ma'am, ikaw daw," she was quite also not comfortable. She kept on saying things na, "Hindi, kayo, kayo." Kaya nung sabi ko naghintay ako, sabi ko, "Ma'am, kung hindi ka mamili ng speaker ngayon, huhulihin kita. Ibalik kita doon sa kulungan." *[laughter]*

So --- of course that was a joke but that was how hard it is or was to really do something or decide on something which would be a part of the governance of our country hereon and for the next --- the remaining years of my presidency.

When Madam Arroyo was President, she envisioned to make sure the Philippines a "Strong Republic." Ganito rin. **That's** also my sloganeering. I always said that my oath of office, reduce it in a very simple term is that: I swore to protect the people and preserve the Republic of the Philippines.

So I would like at any other time, we have acquired so many armaments. And there were things, kakaunti na lang, which I hope that Congress would tide us over to complete the instruments that we need in dealing, especially with terrorism.

I hope that by the time I make my exit, nandiyan na lahat 'yan because I am not belittling the events to come **or** the person coming in to be the next president. Hindi ko alam kung sino. And I'd rather that I leave with a strong military and police and equipped to challenge the enemies of the state, especially terrorism.

I see a very dangerous times ahead. And I hope that we will be able to contain whatever there is **to** really to... But it... Lumalabas nga 'yung pawis sa kamay ko just thinking about if it would go awry outside of Sulu and Basilan Islands.

So that I said, I must be prepared. And nabili **ko na ho** 'yung mga kailangan, but there are still a few things that I must have for my Armed Forces and the Police.

And one of these days, I will call for a --- just --- for a time to talkatise and we'll talk about it because it's really needed by the country.

Now, I only intend to make our country even stronger by following her brilliant example of a strong-willed leadership and decisive governance.

Madam President, we raise our glasses tonight for the invaluable condi --- contributions that you have made as a public servant. May your legacy shine through and inspire millions of Filipinos as we move forward in realizing our dream of building a better and more prosperous Philippines for all.

Daghang salamat and I... I'll just do it myself, I'll give you the toast. Bilib ako sa iyo, ma'am, kasi you might want to know that even when I was mayor and for the years that President Arroyo was there, I was really working for her.

Of course, wala akong pinatay na tao na utos niya. *[laughter]*  
Pinatay ko na lang kasi feeling ko gusto niya. *[laughter]*

Maraming salamat po. *[applause]*

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