

Presidential Communications Operations Office

Presidential News Desk

TOAST REMARKS
OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE STATE BANQUET IN HONOR OF VISITING
MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER TUN DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD

[Rizal Hall, Malacañan Palace | 07 March 2019]

The Honorable Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad; The Honorable Tun Dr. Siti Hasmah binti Haji Mohamad Ali; former President and House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; Senate President Vicente Sotto III; Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen

Tonight, we welcome back to the Philippines a beloved statesman who has earned the respect and friendship of many within our region and beyond.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad returns to Manila with a profound understanding and deep appreciation of the ties that bind the Philippines and Malaysia. He shares the conviction that realizing the promise of Mindanao is crucial for all stakeholders in the region.

I remember vividly his visit to Davao City in 1994 when he, together with then President Fidel Ramos, inaugurated the BIMP-EAGA. For us Mindanaoans, it was a demonstration of confidence in the potentials of Mindanao and a bold investment for greater progress and prosperity for the region.

But in order to achieve lasting peace and growth, the Philippines needed to succeed in securing lasting stability in Mindanao. Prime Minister Mahathir

provided a vital support in this aspect, with Malaysia becoming a facilitator in the peace process.

The ratification of the Bangsamoro Law this year signals the culmination of the years of painstaking efforts by many stakeholders within our own country and by our friends in the international community — especially Malaysia.

Certainly, there are still many challenges ahead. But positive transformation would not continue to happen had [the] wheels not been pushed and made to run back then. And in this, the Prime Minister has been a key figure.

With his Official Visit, we see the Philippines and Malaysia continue working together in a broader arena to stand together on many issues of common concern.

With shared values and aspirations, we continue to forge ahead by standing by and with each other. And we know:

Only [with] collective efforts that we win the war against criminality at sea, terrorism, illegal drugs and other transnational crimes.

Only when guided by our sovereign aspirations and unfettered by external dictates can we achieve equitable growth and sustainable development.

Only when we uphold the rule of law and behave in accordance with time honored principles of international law, including non-interference in domestic affairs, can we earn the international community's respect.

The Prime Minister devoted and demonstrated fealty to these ideals. And I believe there is no better time than now to acknowledge him as a friend, partner and brother.

By all measures, his Official Visit has been a time for us to write a new chapter of friendship, amity and cooperation. And it will be remembered for the storied past that our countries and peoples share, [and] the bright future we are working to achieve for posterity.

Only in this note, may I invite Your Excellencies and our guests to rise as I propose a toast:

To Malaysia and the Philippines, may our country flourish and grow for a thousand years. Mabuhay!

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