

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk**

**MEDIA INTERVIEW OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE DURING  
THE 69TH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT**

[Delivered at the DSWD Central Office in Quezon City | 29 January 2020]

**Q:** Good evening, sir. Sir, do you have any directives regarding the threat of the novel coronavirus? Any directive sir regarding the threat of the novel coronavirus?

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Well, we are as usual --- well there's a protocol for that for the Health people actually and also the Immigration and Health. And they have this instrument where they can sort out whether you are suffering from a fever or something like that.

We are preparing in all ports of entry. We have deployed almost all --- 'yung regional pati national sa port of entries 'yung magpasok galing abroad.

Our preparation is the same. There is no known vaccine. This is a mysterious disease and we are just preparing maybe for the worst

We can marshal what we have but what we do not know, we are at a loss really on what to do, just like other nations now.

**Q:** Sir, what is --- what are your thoughts regarding suggestions to ban travel between the Philippines and some cities in China? Are you inclined to support it or order it?

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Not yet at this time. As a matter of fact, there is no known transmission from human to human na galing China.

Could be. If there is the slightest possibility that a contamination could occur in the Philippines, then we will have to take measures.

Mahirap 'yang ano --- sabihin mo you suspend everything because they are not also suspending theirs and they continue to respect the freedom flights that we enjoy in their country.

**Q:** Okay. Sir, last from me. You mentioned sir 'yung situation sa ports 'yung pag-manage po ng entry sa mga ports. Can you --- what are your directives to, you know, frontliners guarding ports?

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Frontliners are the one, Immigration. Second is the Health officer. And third, maybe the Customs, on things that can be found to be contaminated.

I said, at this time there is no known protocol by which we can follow to combat the disease. We call it mysterious as of now. What we can do is to limit the people entering maybe the Philippines. It could include China but at this time, I am not for it. It would not be fair.

**Q:** Thank you, sir.

**Q:** May plans po ba to repatriate Filipinos from Wuhan, considering na over a hundred na po 'yung namatay and more than 6,000 na po 'yung infected nung novel coronavirus?

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** That is Wuhan?

**Q:** From Wuhan, China, sir.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Yes, that's the place. That place is really admittedly by all as contaminated. And it is locked down in the sense that no one there from that place can go out and the others cannot come in. It is practically like a prison where you cannot move around or get out of the place.

They are discouraging movement even in the place itself. Avoid contacts because that's to avoid contamination.

**Q:** So hindi po natin tata --- i-a-ask 'yung Chinese authorities to i-allow us na i-repatriate 'yung Filipinos po?

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Well, we are always conscious of our citizens, their health. And if they are going home, we are ready to ferry them back to the Philippines but all precautions must be in place.

Maybe the spraying of the entire plane from the landing gear up to the rooftop or whatever. I leave it to the proper authorities to do that.

I said but kung may mga sakit tayo na may tama na at gusto nang umuwi, siyempre kaawa naman kung hindi natin tulungan. I will not argue that they should also be inside a locked down place.

They are given the go signal. My --- well my thinking is that we will just have to go there and rescue them. I said but all precautions must be in place so as not to allow another contamination here.

It's easy for a contamination to spread from people to people. Hindi pa nila alam kung ano `tong yawa na ito eh.

**Q:** Good evening, Mr. President. I am Gen from Manila Bulletin. Sir, on your US trip, have you informed US President Trump about your decision to decline the invitation to attend the summit? And who will represent you to the summit instead?

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** I think by this time our Foreign office must have advised China that I'm not going. And they do not want proxies there. That's what I've noticed when a head of state is absent, his rema --- his chair remains empty. Nobody sits there. So wala siguro. Wala akong maituro na proxy ko, who will act as proxy.

**Q:** Sir, may we know why you are skipping the summit in the US?

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** For strategic and geopolitical considerations.

**Q:** Sir, last question. Sir, on the planned US --- termination of the VFA. Sir, final na po ba ito or are you inclined to change your mind about terminating the VFA?

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** I am terminating. I was not joking. The day I said it was the day that I decided it should be terminated.

Alam mo sabi nila na it's my --- subject to my whim, `yung kapritso. No. It started when they mentioned about the resolution in the US Senate. They were trying to figure --- trying to figure out who would be the persons who will be barred from entering.

Noon pa lang nag --- `yung utak ko gumagalaw na. Ganun ako eh, hindi naman ako naghihintay. I am just --- I just announced late kay pinapauna ko `yung utak ko.

Pero at that time I have decided that if they do this... And I will do it not only for dela Rosa but for every Filipino. Lalo na `yung mga taga-gobyerno na magpunta doon supposedly to attend a business concern officially. `Yung hindi nila... I will limit siguro sa Foreign Affairs. But I will not allow any Cabinet member to go there at this time. No Cabinet member should be allowed to go to the United States.

**Q:** Indefinitely, sir?

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Indefinitely. So that we limit our contact in whatever aspect of international relations would be discussed or subject to talks.

**Q:** So sir, you really want to lessen relations with the US?

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** I am slowly toning it down. And I said as a corollary of dela Rosa's --- well, being --- his cancelled --- his cancelled visa, para sa akin lahat na lang. Lahat ng --- I don't know about the Senate and Congress. They are not under my jurisdiction. But 'yung mga senador --- ah mga sen --- mga Cabinet member ko, I will ask them to not to go to the United States in the meantime. Parang boycott.

**Q:** [off mic]

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Terminated. You know there is a procedure. When you say that 'I want this terminated', in that agreement or whatever it is, there are always rules to follow. The winding up or if there are properties to return the properties used during the --- well, the life of the contract, until it was revoked. Ganun lang 'yan. I'm just toning it down.

Huwag kayong maniwala diyan sa Amerikano. Kanila lahat lang 'yan.

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*SOURCE: PCOO-PND (Presidential News Desk)*