

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

SPEECH OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE DURING HIS VISIT TO JOLO, SULU
[30 August 2020]

I have a two-page speech prepared by the staff. But I shall read it and after that I will just add my own statements to reflect my sentiment of the moment.

To our troops, I stand in solidarity with you as we honor the memory of your comrades, my soldiers, who gave their lives in the name of peace here in Sulu. The recent bombings that took the lives of several civilians including those of your fellow soldiers will only further strengthen our resolve to crush the lawless elements behind this cowardly act.

For decades, Mindanao's progress has been hindered by the threat of insurgency and extremism. Kung wala lang ho sana itong the seed of hatred na nakalagay sa isip from generation to generation, sana ngayon maganda na ang buhay para sa lahat.

This unfortunate incident is only one of the countless incidents that proved that we should never be complacent when it comes to terrorism. Lagi ninyong tandaan na ang kaligtasan ng ating mamamayan at mga komunidad ang inyong prayoridad.

Right now, our entire nation is dealing with the global health crisis yet enemies of the state will still find the energy to perpetuate the acts of violence and terrorism.

Now more than ever our nation needs our Armed Forces to ensure that these terrorists will never succeed in their pointless goals. By choosing to fight for your country here in Sulu, you honor the ultimate sacrifice of your fellow soldiers and the countless others who fought before you.

I know that the ongoing pandemic has not only made your responsibilities even more complicated and more hardships yet in the spirit of selflessness you remain strong in your mission for the Filipino people. Because of this, I am humbled by your commitment, inspired by your patriotism and grateful for a continued support.

Bilang isang Pilipino ibibigay ko sa inyo ang lahat ng suporta na kailangan ninyo para matupad ang inyong misyon dito sa Jolo. I commit myself to work with you my dear troops to ensure that these terrorists will have no future in this country.

You know, Sakur, it is not the fault of the native Filipinos tayo. We never had any religion before until the evangelists of religions came over. Wala ho tayong away noon at maniwala kayo't hindi itong Bisaya pati Tausug kung pakinggan mo lang mabuti magkakaintindihan tayo.

What I'm trying to say is that the irony of it all is that Lapu-Lapu was a spin-off of the tribe of the Tausugs that settled in Cebu is the same Lapu-Lapu that I honor and bestowed upon him the prestige of being a national hero. It was not until after I was President.

You know in the past sinasabi lang nila Lapu-Lapu pampritong isda lang 'yan, inun-unan. But he was the first Filipino to resist the invader. Siya 'yung unang nakipagbambakan and to think that he was a descendant of the Tausugs who settled earlier in the Visayan hemisphere. The other tribe is the Hiligaynon, which are the Ilonggos now.

And yet I am giving awards in his name to soldiers of the Republic of the Philippines to which the Filipino people have agreed to form. Iyan ang --- I was holding the Qur'an and the Bible kanina sandali. In both holy books, there's only one God. It's your Allah, it's God the Father for the Christians. Pareho lang and

yet in thy name because of certain extremist 'yung unang pumasok nagalit doon sa mga Pilipino sa southern part which is now Mindanao at 'yung mga Moro 'yung nagkaisa against the Spaniards.

We never had any quarrels. We never took slaves of any tribe. Tayong lahat magkakaibigan. We were just trading with each other and yet when the Spaniards came, ang problema nagdala ng relihiyon. Well of course also for the Islam but ang Islam for evangelization lang. The Spaniards conquered what is now the Philippines because we choose to name it after King Philip who sponsored this expedition to this part of the world.

Ang ibinibigay kong award in the name of a Tausug for my soldiers who have fought the insurgents now. Kung hindi lang sabihin mo na ang pinapag-usapan natin dito ay ang Diyos nakakatawa eh because you can just imagine ang medalyang ibinibigay ko Lapu-Lapu and he was one --- he was the first defender of aggression by the Spaniards into this country.

Time and again, panahon pa ni Quirino, Kamlon and I could remember still my father who was a member of the Cabinet of Mr. Marcos, I heard him tell stories about why he cannot --- because he can understand matagal dito sa amin. He could not speak it fluently but he could understand Visayan. And it was my father who told me "you just listen carefully the Tausug dialect is similar to the Visayan language."

So iyan ang hindi ko maka --- hindi ko ma --- I cannot divine, I cannot fathom, hindi ko maabot kung paano ito diskartehin. Time and again, peace process, mag-usap tayo, then here comes Al Qaeda na walang ginawa na kung pumatay ka ng tao ke inosente man o hindi, ke Moro man o Kristiyanos, 'pag paputukin ka, putok kayong lahat.

That's why when I visited the blast --- and thank you for sharing with me the gesture --- lumuhod ako, hinalikan ko 'yung at least semento to where my soldiers and the countless and the num --- at saka 'yung mga Tausug na walang ka --- their lives snuffed out for no reason at all.

May dalawang taon pa ako, ewan ko kung ano ang magawa ko talaga. But you know when you go into a fighting may galit na 'yan. Mahirap ito aregluhin kasi lahat may sugat na sa puso. And it would take more than a generation to do this.

I hope that anyone of my children would become a politician maski barangay captain lang that he'd be able also to do something about this problem of the Moro and the Christians.

Walang kasalanan kaya ako lumuhod, hinalikan ko 'yung lupa kasi hindi lang man nakapagtawag 'yung "Allah, I commit my..." o nagpaka-sign of the cross before dying.

Well of course, it's so that in the tat --- Bible, it says Allah is all-knowing and he is everything and he controls the lives of people and the workings of the universe. In the same manner, ganoon rin ang Bibliya ng Kristiyanos. It says that for everything under the sun there is a season. There is season to plant and a time to harvest. There is a time to build and a time to destroy. There is a time for sadness but there is a time for joy. There is a time that we do not talk to each other but there will always be a time na mag-usap sa ayaw mo't sa hindi dadating 'yan because it is Allah's will.

If Allah says that it's about time that we stop the carnage of killing each other then he will find a reason for the Moro and the Christians and the others tribes professing the Christian faith. We will have the time. As there is a time for war and there is a time for peace. Kailan 'yan? Well, I don't know. Because there is a time to live and there is a time to die.

Ikaw 'yung --- I address you because ikaw 'yung nirerespeto ko. You have a color --- colorful life. Kung sa patay dapat patay ka na sa dinaanan mo sa buhay and yet you are still here around. Why don't you try to help me within the next few months last term just to talk about peace? It need not really be a --- an arrangement, just talk about peace.

Mahirap kasi because ang bomba hindi kasi namimili eh. Iyan ang problema. At kung ang pinatay mo inosente, there will always be a time that you will have to answer for the killing of an innocent human being. Maski anong klaseng relihiyon.

Allah says about revenge; Allah says about you know, the giving, the taking of life; and Allah says that there is also a time to answer for all of these things.

So I will end my speech with an appeal that if we cannot really agree, then we fight and we fight hard hanggang magkaubusan na. Maybe by that time, kung ubos na ang lahat, wala ng giyera.

Sa pagka ngayon, hindi ko mapigil ang mga sundalo ko kasi may mission sila and the mission is to crush the insurgents. And the insurgents, ang mission nila is for the greater glory of Allah.

Wala man tayong problema. We honor Allah, we pray to Allah. Ako pa pakabigat because of my mix sa ascendancy. Same, I've always been answered with a lot of blessings from Allah.

So ang hinihingi ko lang sa inyo na even as you fight, think about peace. Because if I will say to you that this is 2020, 2021 aalis na ako. Ang ibig mong sabihin 2023, 2024, 2025, hanggang 2050 ganoon pa rin? Hindi na lang sa relihiyon na ipagpa --- magpakamatay ka. It's about your generation.

How about the flowering of the Moro? Na kagaya ng ibang lugar, Dubai. When will the Moro Filipino ever taste all these luxuries? But only when the leader also, be he a Muslim or a Christian, shall govern according to the will of Allah, of God. Iyan lang.

In the meantime, we fight. And sa pagka ngayon, sabi ko I cannot --- I cannot offer anything because I have also my mandate. I have no --- I do not only order, I impose duties na gawin ninyo ito. But if in the God's time, maybe --- kailan 'yon? --- we will have a time to talk and to ponder about peace at 'yung mga anak ninyo.

Biruin mo naman palakihin mo, hindi mo nga padapuan ng lamok, but only to die walking there on the streets kasama mo. And you know 'yung give and take na vengeance, if it is hatred, it cannot be stopped anymore, hardly.

So it is [an] impossible dream. It is an unreachable star. But it behooves upon us, tayong mga leader, even to try and even to talk as we wage war.

Ako, I do not find anything reprehensible in talking to my enemy across the table and at the same time ordering my soldiers to fight. That's the only way for us to move forward at this time. But I hope --- I hope that Allah will someday give the light to the minds of everybody.

Maraming salamat po. *[applause]*

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