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SPEECH BY

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

AT THE 74TH BIRTHDAY OF THE PHILIPPINE MARINE CORPS (PMC)

[Delivered at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City | 07 November 2024]

Thank you to our National Defense Secretary, Secretary Gilbert Teodoro. *[Please take your seats.]*

House Speaker, Speaker Martin Romualdez; the honorable members of the Diplomatic Corps who have joined us this evening; the members of the Cabinet; AFP Chief of Staff General Romeo Brawner Jr.; Philippine Navy Flag Officer-in-Command Vice Admiral Toribio Adaci; the other Major Service Commanders; Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto-Rubiano; Philippine Marine Corps Commandant Major General Arturo Rojas; the officers, enlisted personnel, and civilian employees of the Philippine Marine Corps; my fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

First of all, congratulations to the Philippine Marine Corps on your 74th Birthday! *[applause]*

Time and again, the Philippine Marine Corps or the PMC has stood at the forefront of our nation's defense, protecting the lives of our people, promoting peace and development, and asserting our sovereignty.

Your unwavering commitment to duty—whether on land or at sea—has been instrumental in shaping the security landscape that we continue to build on today.

As we gather to commemorate your 74th Birthday, it is only fitting that we reflect on your distinguished history and honor the countless sacrifices that you have made in the service of the nation.

Your contributions not only ensured our safety, but have also reinforced the very foundation of our shared future.

What started as a volunteer group has grown into a capable force under the Philippine Navy, entrusted with a critical mission—to safeguard our maritime sovereignty, counter insurgency, and stabilize areas of conflict.

From engaging communist insurgents in the 1950s to adapting to the evolving security challenges of today, your drive has never wavered. You have empowered our nation to confront complex threats and meet each challenge with greater foresight and resolve.

In facing asymmetric threats, you have shown remarkable agility and focus, enabling you to execute high-stakes missions with precision.

Undoubtedly, your specialized skills and tactical expertise have made you an invaluable asset in our fight against insurgency and lawless violence.

When disaster and calamity strike—you also stand ready to bring swift relief and critical aid to our people. In these crucial moments, the Marine Corps steps forward to help us recover, striving to reduce the devastating impact of natural disasters on our communities.

We recognize that the challenges you face now are growing more and more difficult— to defend our islands, to secure our shores, protect our people across the archipelago— each one of these is a pivotal task.

Tasks that we can learn from and find fulfillment in.

This is something I am very familiar with. I trained as a marine back then. *[applause]* At that time, I carried the weight of both pride and responsibility. I came in eager, perhaps a little intimidated and daunted, yet certain that the lessons that I would learn here would last a lifetime.

Joining this force transformed me in ways nothing outside of the military or of the Marine Corps could possibly have given you. The marines have taught me that in moments when the path is unclear, it is our resolve—and the quiet strength to keep rising, to keep moving forward despite setbacks—that defines us.

As we envision the Marine Corps as a specialized force for our littoral defense in the years to come, allow me to reaffirm the promise I made two years ago on this very occasion: to provide support in advancing the mandate of your organization.

We are committed to building a stronger and more comprehensive defense posture by investing in modern infrastructure, upgrading facilities -- facilities that will boost your operations. We will continue to prioritize modernization, ensuring that your defense capabilities align with our nation's strategic needs.

To the men and women of the Marine Corps, I enjoin you to embody the dedication and excellence that have long characterized the legacy of the marines.

Impart these values to the next generation, so that together, we can strengthen our communities, reinforce our people, and build a brighter, more prosperous future for all.

As we mark this milestone, let us not simply trace our roots but also celebrate the legacy of service that you have nurtured over the many years.

Once again, my sincere congratulations to all, especially to our awardees and every marine who has come this far.

Let us embrace the present with renewed hope and resolve, steering towards a *Bagong Pilipinas* where the Marine Corps rises as a formidable force in our shared prosperity and advancement.

Maraming salamat po.

Mabuhay ang Philippine Marine Corps!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! [applause]

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