

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK
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**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE
(PAF) CHANGE OF COMMAND AND RETIREMENT CEREMONY IN HONOR OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL STEPHEN P. PARREÑO, COMMANDING GENERAL**
[Delivered at Villamor Airbase, Pasay City | 19 December 2024]

Thank you, our National Defense Secretary, Secretary Gilbert Teodoro.

[Please take your seats]

The Special Assistant to the President, Secretary Anton Lagdameo; Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines General Romeo Brawner and the major service commanders; Philippine National Police Chief General Rommel Marbil; immediate past Commanding General of the Philippine Air Force Lieutenant General Stephen Parreño; the newly installed Commanding General of the Philippine Airforce, Lieutenant General Arthur Cordura; the officers and the enlisted personnel of the Philippine Air Force; my fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

Today, we stand together to honor a leader who has served our nation with unparalleled distinction.

Lieutenant General Stephen Parreño, as Commanding General of the Philippine Air Force, has led this institution to soar to new heights over the past two years.

Your steadfast commitment to the command thrust *Accelerate PAF with Excellence* has inspired every airman to embrace the ideals of competence, professionalism, and responsiveness—values that have guided your every endeavor.

The legacy of your leadership is etched in the achievements of the Philippine Air Force under your watch.

By logging over 2500 flying hours dedicated to external defense and conducting 450 maritime patrol missions, you have strengthened our nation's territorial integrity and protected our exclusive economic zone.

These are not just records; they represent vigilance, determination, and an unwavering resolve to safeguard our airspace.

In these efforts, our skilled pilots have remained resolute, intercepting threats [and] monitoring unidentified tracks that encroach upon our airspace.

Your courage is matched by their expertise, honed through bilateral and multilateral exercises like *Cope Thunder* [and] *Balikatan*, as well as the deployment of strategic assets to the *Pitch Black* exercise in Australia.

These initiatives have enhanced our interoperability with foreign partners and reinforced the credibility of our Air Force on the international stage.

In addressing multifaceted threats, your leadership has been instrumental. The Air Force carried out nearly 120 intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions—efforts that directly supported our law enforcement operations.

Moreover, 320 trafficked individuals were rescued from exploitation, [and] millions of pesos worth of illegal goods were confiscated, and it demonstrated a relentless pursuit of justice and of security.

The Air Force has also been a stalwart partner of this Administration in times of crisis, embodying the highest ideals of the service.

Through over 324 humanitarian assistance and disaster response missions, our airmen transported one-point-four million pounds of essential supplies and conducted 200 aeromedical operations, saving many, many lives.

Complementing these efforts, you have also spearheaded over 8,400 civil-military operations, advancing environmental sustainability and public health, reaffirming its role as a vital pillar of national development.

Your tenure, Lieutenant General Parreño, likewise marked significant strides in capability enhancement for our air force.

The acquisition of one C-295 medium-lift aircraft, two T-129 ATAK helicopters, one mobile radar, one fixed radar, and ten S-70i Black Hawk helicopters, among other critical equipment, has increased our readiness to confront evolving challenges.

These accomplishments are a testament to your vision, diligence, and unyielding commitment to the mission at hand. After 37 years of dedicated service to our nation, you pass on a legacy that embodies excellence and inspires the next generation of leaders to build upon the foundations that you have laid.

As we bid farewell to Lieutenant General Parreño's distinguished tenure, we now warmly congratulate the newly appointed Commanding General of the Philippine Air Force Lieutenant General Arthur Cordura.

The road ahead is not without its challenges, but I am confident that you will rise to meet those challenges. With your steadfast leadership, you can guide the Air Force towards becoming an institution that is more agile, credible, and responsive to the demands of an ever-evolving security landscape.

To the men and women of the Philippine Air Force, your service is a source of immense pride for our country. Under this new leadership, you may continue to reach even greater heights, embodying the principles of honor, duty, [and] excellence.

These times call for vigilance and for resolve. There is no room for complacency, for any pause in our efforts to risk compromising the safety and welfare of the Filipino people.

We must ensure that the continued modernization of our armed forces remains a priority, empowering us to protect the ideals that define our nation.

Let us move forward as one, shaping a *Bagong Pilipinas* where the Philippine Air Force remains a beacon of strength, a protector of the values that we hold dear, and the symbol of hope for our people.

Mabuhay ang Hukbong Himpapawid ng Pilipinas!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!

Maraming salamat at magandang araw sa inyong lahat! *[applause]*

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