

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE**  
**PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**  
Ref: Dir. Robertzon F. Ramirez

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE 89<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES**

[Delivered at Lapu-Lapu Grandstand in Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City  
[20 December 2024]

Thank you to the National Defense Secretary, Secretary Gilbert Teodoro for his kind introduction.

[Please take your seats.]

Troop Commander, you will please give the command of *tikas pahinga*.

The members of the Philippines Cabinet present with us here today; the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, General Romeo Brawner Jr. and the major services commanders; the officers, enlisted personnel, and civilian employees of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; my fellow workers in government; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

It is my great pleasure to congratulate the men, women, and civilian component of the Armed Forces of the Philippines on your 89<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

The history of the AFP is intertwined with the history of our Republic.

From your establishment under the National Defense Act of 1935—envisioned by President Manuel Quezon—you have stood as the backbone of our nation’s sovereignty.

For almost nine decades now, you have protected the Filipino people, upheld our democracy, proven that even in the most challenging of times, the spirit of service and sacrifice rises above all.

You have never wavered in your mission. You have weathered the darkest storms and risen to meet the most pressing challenges of our time. And in doing so, you have earned the enduring respect and admiration of all Filipino citizens. *[applause]*

Today, we go beyond celebrating the strength of your arms or the victories that you have won. We are honoring the ideals you embody— the ideals of honor, service, patriotism.

These ideals are etched into the fabric of the AFP, making you not only guardians of our nation— but also beacons of hope and pride for Filipinos around the world.

In recent years, you have shown us what it means to adapt, to evolve, to persevere in the face of change.

You have become an agile and responsive force, attuned to the shifting demands of our security landscape. And this is no small feat.

For the threats we face today are no longer confined to our shores or to the traditional battlefield. They are now complex, multifaceted, and, at times, invisible.

The geopolitical developments and tensions continue to test our sovereignty and our resolve. The surge in cybersecurity threats, if unchallenged and unaddressed, will challenge our national security.

Meanwhile, the pervasive force of misinformation and disinformation undermines the values that we all hold dear, threatening the democracy we have fought so hard to protect.

Despite all of these, the AFP has remained steadfast. You have shown that you are a force for peace, a force of progress, and solidarity—a partner in building a stronger, more resilient Bagong Pilipinas.

As we commemorate your accomplishments, we must also look forward to the future that awaits. The modern age demands that we meet these evolving challenges head-on. It calls for an AFP that is grounded in an understanding of its role in a rapidly changing world.

This Administration is committed to ensuring that you are prepared for that future. Through the Self-Reliant Defense Posture Revitalization Program, we aim to reduce our dependence on foreign sources and empower the AFP to develop its own capabilities.

But modernization is not simply about acquiring advanced equipment; it is about transforming the way we think, the way we act, and the way we operate as a unified force.

To enhance our capabilities and preparedness, we are harnessing the latest technologies, reinforcing our strategies, and enhancing the skills of every soldier, every sailor, every airman. This ensures that we are ready to succeed in the battles on the field [and] in cyberspace, for the peace of mind of our people.

After all, we are building an AFP that can hold its own on the global stage—one that stands shoulder to shoulder with the world's finest armed forces.

As your Commander-in-Chief, I encourage you to remain true to the values that have guided this institution for 89 years. Uphold honor in the face of adversity. Lead with compassion, especially in times of crisis. Inspire with your humanity, for it is your very character that defines the Armed Forces.

Let the AFP emerge as the embodiment of the Filipino spirit—a spirit that stands firm against oppression, adapts to the demands of the time, and always places the welfare of the nation above all else.

I am pleased to see the relaunching as well of the AFP museum. The preservation of our history, of our Armed Forces is vital to remember our country's past while keeping our vision of a truly prosperous and secure future.

We look to the AFP as defenders of our nation [and] as examples of courage and integrity. We rely on you to set the standard for patriotism in action—soldiers who serve not for glory, but for the enduring promise of a better nation.

And as we do this, we stand behind you—we will provide the tools, the resources, the support necessary to help you succeed. We will ensure that your sacrifices are met with tangible action: The modernization of our assets, the protection of your families' welfare, and the recognition of your invaluable contributions to our shared future.

Kanina lamang ay aking iginawad ang Medalya ng Kagitingan kay First Lieutenant Dhell Jun C. Evangelista o mas kilala bilang Delpot sa kaniyang mga kaibigan.

Sa kabila ng kanyang batang edad, labis ang sakripisyo at paglilingkod na kanyang ipinamalas upang masiguro ang seguridad ng atig bansa. Maraming salamat sa iyong paglilingkod sa sambayanan at sa lahat ng Pilipino.

Ang iyong alaala ay habambuhay nang nakaukit sa kasaysayan ng AFP.

Itong pasasalamat ay hindi lamang para kay Delpot. Sa ating kasundaluhan, sa bawat sakripisyong inyong ibinibigay—ang pagiwan sa inyong pamilya upang tugunan ang inyong tungkulin, [ang] pagpapanatili ng kapayapaan sa gitna ng panganib, at ang pagaalay ng sarili para sa kapakanan ng nakararami—ipinapaalala ninyo sa amin kung ano ang tunay na kahulugan ng paglilingkod: Bayan muna bago ang sarili.

Nasusukat ang inyong galing sa inyong dedikasyon na ipaglaban ang kalayaan, protektahan ang mga walang kalaban-laban, at itaguyod ang mga adhikain ng ating bayan.

Makakaasa kayong nasa likod ninyo ang sambayanang Pilipino—nagdarasal para sa inyong kaligtasan, nagtitiwala sa inyong kakayahan, at umaasa na patuloy ninyong isasabuhay ang inyong tungkulin nang may katapatan.

Sama-sama nating itaguyod ang pangarap ng bawat Pilipino na makapamuhay sa isang mas maunlad, mas makatarungan, at mas malayang Bagong Pilipinas.

Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat!

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Mabuhay ang Armed Forces of the Philippines!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! *[applause]*

---END---