

FINAL

OUR CENTENNIAL NAVY: PEACE AND PROGRESS IN THE SEAS

**Speech of H.E. President Fidel V. Ramos
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INTRODUCTION

I COME HERE TODAY, AS PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, AND ON BEHALF OF OUR PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT, TO CELEBRATE WITH YOU THE FIRST CENTENNIAL OF OUR PHILIPPINE NAVY (PN).

TO OUR FOREIGN FRIENDS HERE TODAY, IT MAY COME AS A SURPRISE THAT WE ARE MARKING THE NAVY'S 100TH YEAR JUST 20 DAYS BEFORE THE COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENNIAL OF PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE ON JUNE 12. IN THE ANNALS OF OUR NATION, THE TWO EVENTS ARE INTERTWINED. AND BOTH SIGNIFIED OUR PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE TO BE SOVEREIGN IN OUR OWN LAND.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BATTLE OF MANILA BAY ON MAY 1, 1898 BETWEEN THE AMERICAN ASIATIC FLEET OF COMMODORE DEWEY AND THE SPANISH ARMADA OF ADMIRAL MONTJOJO, GENERAL EMILIO AGUINALDO ACQUIRED A STEAM PINNACE (SHIP TENDER) FROM THE SPANISH FLAGSHIP "*REINA CRISTINA*". HE CHRISTENED IT "*MAGDALO*" AND IT BECAME THE FIRST PHILIPPINE REVOLUTIONARY NAVY VESSEL.

THE VESSEL STEAMED AROUND MANILA BAY DISPLAYING THE PHILIPPINE FLAG UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYES OF THE FORMIDABLE GERMAN, FRENCH, BRITISH AND AMERICAN NAVAL FLEETS ASSEMBLED IN THESE WATERS 100 YEARS AGO. HISTORIANS TELL US THAT THIS GALLANT DISPLAY OF FILIPINO SOVEREIGNTY WAS MET WITH PROTESTS BY THE FRENCH AND GERMAN NAVIES, BUT THESE WERE IGNORED BY GENERAL AGUINALDO AND ADMIRAL DEWEY.

THIS BIT OF HISTORY IS SIGNIFICANT NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT ACCOMPANIED THE BIRTH OF THE PN, BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT TELLS US THAT THE PHILIPPINE FLAG WAS FIRST HOISTED ABOARD A PHILIPPINE VESSEL. IT SERVED AS A DECLARATION TO THE WHOLE WORLD THAT THE PHILIPPINE REPUBLIC WAS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING BORN. INDEED, THE FLYING OF OUR FLAG FOR THE FIRST TIME ABOARD THE NAVY VESSEL "*MAGDALO*" WAS ONE OF THE PROUDEST MOMENTS IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY.

100 YEARS OF NAVAL SERVICE

FROM THAT MOMENT IN TIME TO THE PRESENT, THE PN HAS NEVER WAVERED IN DEFENDING OUR FLAG AND IN ASSERTING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF OUR PEOPLE OVER ALL AREAS FORMING PART OF THE NATIONAL TERRITORY.

OVER THE PAST 100 YEARS, THE PN HAS BEEN IN THE MAINSTREAM OF EVERY PIVOTAL EVENT THAT HAS SHAPED OUR COUNTRY'S RICH HISTORY.

FROM THE MOSQUITO FLEET OF GENERAL AGUINALDO, TO THE "Q"-BOATS OF PRESIDENT MANUEL QUEZON, TO THE OFFSHORE PATROL AND OTHER NAVAL UNITS THAT SAW ACTION IN WORLD WAR II, TO OUR TRANSPORT SHIPS WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE KOREAN AND VIETNAM WARS, TO OUR MARINE FORCES DURING THE MINDANAO PACIFICATION CAMPAIGNS, TO OUR SEABEES WHO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TO THE COAST GUARD IN MARITIME SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, TO THE PHILIPPINE FLEET IN THEIR TERRITORIAL PATROLS -- OUR NAVY HAS FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE EVOLVING SAGA OF OUR NATION. EACH NAVAL UNIT HAS ITS OWN STORY TO TELL, AND COLLECTIVELY THEY CONSTITUTE THE GLORY OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVAL SERVICE.

TODAY, THE PN PERFORMS AN EVEN GREATER ROLE IN THE PURSUIT OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT.

IN LINE WITH THE MODERNIZATION OF OUR ARMED FORCES, THE NAVY IS EXPECTED TO UPGRADE ITS CAPABILITIES NOT IN THE CONTEXT OF BECOMING A FORMIDABLE WAR MACHINERY, BUT OF RESPONDING TO ITS ROLE AS AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POLICY AND NATION-BUILDING.

THE PHILIPPINE NAVY TODAY

ENSHRINED IN OUR CONSTITUTION IS THE RENUNCIATION OF WAR AS A NATIONAL POLICY AND ADHERENCE TO THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, OF WHICH THE PN IS THE PRIMARY IMPLEMENTOR WITHIN OUR TERRITORIAL WATERS.

THE MODERNIZATION OF OUR ARMED FORCES, THEREFORE IMPLIES A BROAD, STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE, A GENERATIONAL TIME FRAME, AND A COMMITMENT TO A COMPREHENSIVE OUTCOME THAT WOULD HELP INSURE A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE PHILIPPINES AND THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION. IN OTHER WORDS, INSTEAD OF PREPARING TO WIN A WAR, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO WIN THE FUTURE.

THE DAYS OF NAVAL BATTLES OF THE KIND WE SAW DURING WORLD WAR II ARE PERHAPS GONE FOREVER. THE ENCOUNTER AT MANILA BAY BETWEEN TWO NAVAL FLEETS 100 YEARS AGO THAT TOOK PLACE IN THESE IMMEDIATE WATERS (*POINTING TOWARDS SANGLEY*) WILL NOT, IN MY VIEW, HAPPEN AGAIN. INSTEAD, NAVAL ENGAGEMENTS, HENCEFORTH, WOULD CONSIST OF A COLLECTIVE EFFORT AMONG THE NAVIES OF THE WORLD TO SUSTAIN AND PRESERVE THE CONDITIONS OF PEACE, STABILITY AND PROGRESS.

SOLIDARITY IN THE REGION

I SINCERELY BELIEVE THAT THIS MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS AND OUR UNIVERSAL LOVE OF FREEDOM ARE REASONS ENOUGH TO GATHER TOGETHER HERE TODAY THE WESTERN PACIFIC NAVIES. YOUR PRESENCE IS AFFIRMATION OF YOUR PRIMORDIAL PEACEKEEPING ROLE AND OF YOUR DESIRE, AS MUCH AS OURS, OF STRENGTHENING THE BONDS AMONG NAVAL FORCES WITHIN OUR REGION.

A NAVY FORCE BY ITSELF IS FORMIDABLE, BUT WHEN NAVIES GATHER TOGETHER, THE EFFECT IS NOTHING LESS THAN AWESOME, AND THE MESSAGE CANNOT BE IGNORED.

YOU HAVE BROUGHT TO OUR SHORES A MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY, AND THIS FEELING OF ONENESS, HOPEFULLY, WILL BE ECHOED IN YOUR HOMELANDS. THIS SENSE OF UNITY AND CAMARADERIE SHOULD BE A BUILDING BLOCK TOWARDS A PEACEFUL AND RESURGENT ASIA-PACIFIC REGION. IT PROVIDES THE ASSURANCE THAT WE ALL WANT TO MAKE OUR SEAS A SAFER PLACE WHERE THE PEOPLE OF EVERY NATION CAN RELY UPON

THEIR NAVAL FORCES TO HELP UPHOLD THE SAFETY OF LIFE, FREEDOM OF PASSAGE AND EQUAL PROTECTION FOR ALL.

TRIBUTE TO NAVAL FLEETS

WITH GREAT PRIDE AND APPRECIATION THEN, I SALUTE AND THANK OUR FOREIGN NAVY GUESTS FOR JOINING US HERE TODAY. AND I THANK YOU FOR THE HONOR ACCORDED THE PRESIDENT OF OUR REPUBLIC AS REVIEWING OFFICER OF THE MULTI-NATIONAL NAVAL PARADE.

I THEREFORE REQUEST THE CHIEFS OF FOREIGN NAVIES AND THE MEMBERS OF THEIR DELEGATIONS TO PLEASE RISE TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED, AND I NOW ASK MY COUNTRYMEN AND COUNTRYWOMEN TO GIVE THEM A ROUSING "MABUHAY" AND BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

BY THE SAME TOKEN, I ALSO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE PN, HEADED BY THEIR CENTENNIAL FLAG OFFICER IN COMMAND, VICE ADMIRAL EDUARDO MA. R. SANTOS AFP, FOR HAVING MADE THE PN TRULY WORTHY OF CELEBRATING ITS 100TH YEAR OF SERVICE TO PEOPLE AND COUNTRY.

MAY I LIKEWISE REQUEST THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY TO PLEASE RISE AT *PALAKPAKAN NINYO ANG INYONG SARILI* FOR A JOB WELL DONE. BRAVO ZULU TO ALL OF YOU.

AS CENTENNIAL FILIPINOS, IT IS OUR GOOD FORTUNE TO BE WHERE WE ARE RIGHT NOW, REAPING THE GLORY OF THE PAST 100 YEARS, AND PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR THE NEXT 100.

BUT HISTORY WILL BE KIND TO US ONLY IF WE SEIZE WITH RESOLVE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO RENDER PUBLIC SERVICE. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS NOT WHETHER WE CELEBRATED OR NOT, BUT WHETHER WE PROVIDED SUFFICIENT CAUSE FOR CELEBRATING.

LET ME SAY THAT DURING MY PRESIDENCY, I HAVE ALWAYS RELIED UPON THE PN IN MATTERS OF DUTY, SERVICE AND COUNTRY, AND THE PN HAS ALWAYS, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, PERFORMED EXCEEDINGLY WELL.

YOUR CENTENNIAL THEME, "KAPAYAPAAAN AT KASAGANAAN SA KARAGATAN", MEANING PEACE AND PROGRESS IN OUR SEAS, IS THE ESSENCE OF ANY NAVY WORTH ITS SALT. IT IS A COMMITMENT NOT BOUND BY TIME AND SPACE, MAKING IT A MOST APPROPRIATE BATTLECRY, TODAY AND FOR THE NEXT 100 YEARS.

ONCE AGAIN, I SALUTE YOU ALL FOR YOUR CONTINUING ACHIEVEMENTS, AND WISH YOU ALWAYS FAIR WINDS, CLEAR SKIES AND FOLLOWING SEAS ON YOUR VOYAGE TO YOUR SECOND CENTURY OF PROUD SERVICE TO THE FILIPINO NATION.

MARAMING SALAMAT SA INYONG PAGSUPORTA SA PANGULO NG ATING REPUBLIKA.

MABUHAY ANG HUKBONG DAGAT NG PILIPINAS!

MABUHAY ANG REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS!

MARAMING SALAMAT, MAGANDANG UMAGA, AT MABUHAY TAYONG LAHAT!