



# KEYNOTE SPEECH OF THE SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

**77th Founding Anniversary of the Department of National Defense**  
29 November 2016 (10:00 AM); Tejeros Hall, AFP Commissioned Officers' Clubhouse  
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

TO OUR “**ONE DEFENSE TEAM**” CONSISTING OF OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE – PROPER, ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES, AND CIVILIAN BUREAUS; OUR EMPLOYEES, ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS ATTACHÉS FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES, GUESTS, FRIENDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: A BLESSED MORNING TO ALL!

I AM EXTREMELY HAPPY THAT YOU JOINED US IN CELEBRATING THE 77<sup>TH</sup> FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY OF OUR DEPARTMENT.

OUR GLORIOUS HISTORY REFLECTS ITS LOFTY TRADITION OF BEING THE DEFENDER OF THE STATE AND THE FILIPINO PEOPLE. FOUNDED IN 1939 BY VIRTUE OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE ACT OF 1935, ITS PRIMARY OBJECTIVE WAS TO FORM AN ARMED FORCES THAT WAS CAPABLE OF DEFENDING THE COMMONWEALTH STATE FROM FOREIGN AGRESSION.

OVER THE YEARS, A LOT HAS CHANGED IN THE DEPARTMENT. FROM ITS HUMBLE BEGINNING AS A SIMPLE AND SMALL ORGANIZATION, IT IS NOW RECOGNIZED AS A STRONG ORGANIZATION THAT IS



CAPABLE OF FULFILING ITS MANDATE OF SECURING THE COUNTRY FROM ANY THREAT, BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL.

IN JUST FOUR MONTHS OF WORKING TOGETHER AS **ONE DEFENSE TEAM**, WE HAVE FAITHFULLY ASSISTED IN ENFORCING OUR LAWS AND MAINTAINING PEACE AND ORDER, AS DIRECTED BY OUR PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

FOREMOST IN OUR MISSION WAS OUR FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM. TO ONCE AND FOR ALL END THE ATROCITIES OF THE BANDIT GROUP ABU SAYYAF, WE HAVE SIGNED THE **“PHILIPPINES – INDONESIA - MALAYSIA TRILATERAL COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT”** LAST AUGUST TO INSTITUTIONALIZE AND FORTIFY OUR DEFENCE COOPERATION WITH TWO OF OUR NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY, INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA, IN COMBATING PIRACY, KIDNAP FOR RANSOM, TRANSNATIONAL CRIMES AND TERRORISM IN OUR COMMON MARITIME AREAS.

WE HAVE ALSO SENT 3 ARMY BRIGADES AND 18 BATTALIONS IN SULU AND BASILAN, ALONG WITH 6 CAFGU ACTIVE AUXILIARY COMPANIES TO CRUSH THOSE BANDITS.

IN COORDINATION WITH THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE, WE HAVE BROUGHT JUSTICE TO THE VICTIMS OF THE DAVAO CITY BOMBING LAST SEPTEMBER, WITH



THE CAPTURE OF THE **MAUTE** GROUP WHICH HAS LONG BEEN SOWING VIOLENCE AND TERROR IN CENTRAL MINDANAO. TWO DAYS AGO, 35 OF THEM HAVE PERISHED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST OUR TROOPS WHO ARE RELENTLESSLY PURSUING THE OTHER BANDITS IN HIDING.

WITH REGARD TO THE ADMINISTRATION'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST ILLEGAL DRUGS, THE AFP, TOGETHER WITH THE PNP, PDEA, NBI, AND OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, FORMED **ASK FORCE NOAH** WHICH CONDUCTS INTELLIGENCE AND COUNTER - INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS, IDENTIFICATION, INVESTIGATION, AND ARREST OF PERSONALITIES INVOLVED IN THE MANUFACTURE, SALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF PROHIBITED DRUGS. AT PRESENT, MORE THAN 169 OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED BY THE TASK FORCE, YIELDING 689 SURRENDEREES, 191 ARRESTED, AND 8 KILLED IN THE ENCOUNTER.

AS REGARDS THE REHABILITATION OF DRUG USERS, THE AFP READILY OFFERED 16 MILITARY CAMPS AS POSSIBLE SITES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF DRUG ABUSE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTERS.

JUST RECENTLY, WE HAVE INAUGURATED THE RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTER INSIDE THE 401ST BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS IN AGUSAN DEL SUR. THE **MEGA REHABILITATION CENTER**



IN FORT MAGSAYSAY, NUEVA ECIJA WHICH WILL BE INAUGURATED TODAY BY THE PRESIDENT, IS LARGE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE AND TREAT 10,000 PATIENTS. SIMILAR REHABILITATION CENTERS TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WILL SOON BE CONSTRUCTED IN VARIOUS MILITARY CAMPS NATIONWIDE.

THE AFP HAS ALSO CONDUCTED RANDOM DRUG TESTING TO 19,163 SOLDIERS AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENT'S ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGN AND TO SERVE AS WORTHY EXAMPLE TO OUR CITIZENS, ESPECIALLY THE YOUTH. I AM PLEASED TO INFORM YOU THAT ONLY 36 TESTED POSITIVE AND ALL OF THEM HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISMISSED FROM THE SERVICE.

IN SUPPORT TO OUR GOVERNMENT'S PEACE INITIATIVES, THE AFP IMMEDIATELY ORDERED THE SUSPENSION OF MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST CPP-NPA-NDF IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE INSTRUCTED BY THE PRESIDENT IN HIS STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS LAST JULY.

WE HAVE ALSO PROCESSED THE TEMPORARY RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS TO PAVE THE WAY FOR PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. WE ALSO SUPPORT PEACE INITIATIVES WITH LEGITIMATE GROUPS IN MINDANAO LIKE THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT AT MORO



NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT. WITH OPTIMISM, I CAN SAY THAT THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION HAS BETTER CHANCES AT WINNING PEACE AND FORGING NATIONAL UNITY BECAUSE OF AN ELEMENT THAT WAS LACKING OR ABSENT IN THE PAST BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE REBELS: **SINCERITY TO EACH OTHER.**

AT THIS POINT IN TIME, I BELIEVE THAT THE LEADERS OF THE CPP-NPA-NDF, AND ALSO THE M-I-L-F AND M-N-L-F, WOULD WANT TO LEAVE A MEANINGFUL AND LASTING LEGACY TO THE NEXT GENERATION, AND THIS LEGACY IS NONE OTHER THAN GENUINE AND LASTING PEACE, PEACE THAT WILL USHER IN DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL FILIPINOS.

IN OUR DESIRE TO IMPLEMENT AN INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY AS ENSHRINED IN OUR CONSTITUTION, OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE IS CLEAR: THE PHILIPPINES IS A FREE AND SOVEREIGN COUNTRY. THOUGH NOT AS BIG AND AS POWERFUL AS OTHER NATION-STATES, WE WILL NOT BOW DOWN TO THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS. OUR COUNTRY HAS NO ENEMY. IT HAS MANY FRIENDS. IN DEALING WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, WE SHALL MAKE SURE THAT OUR NATIONAL INTEREST WOULD PREVAIL. ALL MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL MILITARY EXERCISES SHALL FOCUS ON HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RESPONSE, CIVIC WORKS, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ERADICATION OF ILLEGAL DRUGS.



EVEN IF WE HAVE A ROBUST AND LONG-STANDING RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, WE ARE OPEN TO COOPERATION WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN ASIA AND EVEN IN OTHER CONTINENTS. WE NOW HAVE PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR ASEAN NEIGHBORS AS WELL AS JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA, CHINA, PERU AND RUSSIA. MOST OF THESE HAVE BEEN VISITED BY THE PRESIDENT LATELY.

AND SINCE WE ARE PART OF THE “ONE DEFENSE TEAM,” WE HAVE LOOKED INTO THE MORALE AND WELFARE OF OUR SOLDIERS, WHO, ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT, ARE THE REAL HEROES OF OUR TIME FOR THEIR SELFLESS SACRIFICES FOR OUR NATION.

WE HAVE COMPLETED THE REHABILITATION OF CAMP TEODULFO BAUTISTA STATION HOSPITAL IN JOLO, SULU, AND ASSISTED IN THE HOUSING, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING NEEDS OF SOLDIERS WOUNDED IN BATTLE, AND FAMILIES OF SOLDIERS WHO WERE KILLED IN ACTION.

THE PRESIDENT HAS ESTABLISHED THE **COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL BENEFITS PROGRAM FOR AFP AND PNP BATTLE CASUALTIES AND THEIR DEPENDENTS** WHICH AIMS TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE LIVELIHOOD, HEALTH AND EDUCATION PRIVILEGES TO BATTLE CASUALTY SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES.



I AM ALSO PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE BRP ANDRES BONIFACIO IS CURRENTLY SAILING TOWARDS ITS NEW HOME HERE IN THE PHILIPPINES FROM THE UNITED STATES. THIS VESSEL THAT WAS NAMED AFTER THE “SUPREMO” OR FOUNDER OF THE **KATIPUNAN**, IS THE THIRD WEATHER HIGH ENDURANCE CUTTER OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY. LIKEWISE, THE BRP DAVAO DEL SUR, OUR SECOND STRATEGIC SEALIFT VESSEL, HAS BEEN COMMISIONED.

FOR OUR PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE, IT HAS RECEIVED ITS SECOND C-130-T HERCULES FROM THE U.S.A. TWO MORE F-A-50S WILL BE ARRIVING ON DECEMBER FIRST, TO BE FOLLOWED BY FOUR MORE FIGHTER PLANES. WE ARE EXPECTING EIGHT MORE IN THE COMING MONTHS.

FOR OUR ENGINEERING UNITS, WE HAVE RECEIVED HEAVY EQUIPMENT LIKE BACKHOES, LOADERS, ROAD ROLLERS, EXCAVATORS AND CRANES.

OUR GOVERNMENT ARSENAL HAS PRODUCED OVER NINE MILLION BULLETS FOR SMALL FIREARMS, SUFFICIENT FOR THE NEED OF THE AFP. IT HAS ALSO COMPLETED VARIOUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TO UPGRADE THE PRODUCTION OF AMMUNITION.

THESE AFP MODERNIZATION PROJECTS PURSUANT TO REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7898 AS AMENDED BY 10349, HAVE BEEN STARTED BY THE PREVIOUS



ADMINISTRATION. I MENTIONED THESE TO EMPHASIZE THE FACT THAT OUR MODERNIZATION WILL NOT BE STOPPED, ALTERED OR HAMPERED, RATHER, IT WILL CONTINUE TO GAIN MUCH NEEDED SUPPORT FROM THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION.

WE ALSO CONTINUE TO UPLIFT THE WELFARE AND WELL-BEING OF OUR NATION'S VETERANS. RECENTLY, THE PHILIPPINE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE HAS FULLY SETTLED THE ARREARAGES IN TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE DISABILITY PENSION OF DECEASED VETERANS WHO DID NOT RECEIVE PAYMENT IN THEIR LIFETIME DUE TO LACK OF FUNDS. MORE THAN PHP4 BILLION WAS DISBURSED TO 21,683 SPOUSES. OVER PHP 8 MILLION WAS PAID TO 502 SCHOLARS UNDER THE VETERANS' EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT PROGRAM. ABOUT PHP2 MILLION WAS UTILIZED FOR THE 173 PARTIAL HOSPITALIZATION SUBSIDY OF VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS AND ANOTHER PHP4 MILLION WAS PAID TO REIMBURSE 165 PATIENTS UNDER THE ENHANCED VETERANS HOSPITALIZATION AND MEDICAL CARE PROGRAM.

I HAVE ALSO DIRECTED THE LEADERSHIP OF PVAO AND THE AFP TO STREAMLINE THE PROCESSING OF BENEFITS TO PENSIONERS AND MAKE THE VALIDATION OF PENSIONERS MORE EFFICIENT. USING AUTOMATION, LET US EASE THE BURDERNS OF OUR VETERANS, BOTH





OF WORLD WAR II AND THE RETIREES, AS WELL AS THEIR BENEFICIARIES.

TO DEEPEN OUR LOVE OF COUNTRY, WE CONTINUE TO LEAD OBSERVANCES AND HISTORICAL COMMEMORATIONS AND EVENTS WITH MILITARY AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE. WE ALSO UPGRADE OUR MILITARY SHRINES TO WORLD-CLASS STANDARDS AS SUCH MEMORIALS ARE PERPETUAL REMINDERS OF OUR NATION'S GLORIOUS PAST. AND TO ENSURE THAT OUR VETERANS' MEMORY AND LEGACY ARE NOT FORGOTTEN, WE CONTINUE TO PUBLISH BOOKS ON THE EXPLOITS OF OUR VETERANS AND THE VICTORY OF THE FILIPINO FORCES THROUGHOUT HISTORY.

IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION, WE HAVE PROVIDED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RESPONSE OPERATIONS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER TYPHOON FERDIE AND SUPER TYPHOON LAWIN. THOUGH THE STRENGTH OF LAWIN WAS UNPRECEDENTED AT SIGNAL NO. 5, WE WERE FORTUNATE TO HAVE REDUCED THE LEVEL OF CASUALTY AND DAMAGES TO PROPERTY BECAUSE OF OUR PROACTIVE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM IN COOPERATION WITH THE AFFECTED PROVINCES AND MUNICIPALITIES WHO EMPLOYED EARLY WARNING AND PREEMPTIVE EVACUATION IN COMMUNITIES.



FOR OUR INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE COOPERATION, WE HAVE BROUGHT 133 OF OUR TROOPS AS MEMBERS OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> PHILIPPINE CONTINGENT IN HAITI. WE HAVE ALSO SUCCESSFULLY HOSTED THE CHIEFS OF DEFENSE CONFERENCE WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY 22 ARMED FORCES CHIEFS FROM THE INDO-ASIA PACIFIC REGION.

OUR AFP HAS ALSO HELPED CONSTRUCT 8 CLASSROOMS AND 4 PUBLIC REST ROOMS IN JUST A FEW MONTHS, TRUE TO ITS COMMITMENT TO NATION-BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT.

IN THE ASPECT OF DEVELOPING NATIONAL SECURITY EXPERTS, 65 MEMBERS OF THE REGULAR CLASS 51 HAS GRADUATED WITH MASTER'S DEGREE IN NATIONAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION. THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE OF THE PHILIPPINES HAS SPEARHEADED THE BARANGAY CRITICAL INCIDENT AND INTERNAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE COURSE WHEREIN 22 BARANGAYS IN QUEZON CITY ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED. IT HAS ALSO PUBLISHED STUDIES AND RESEARCH ON NATIONAL SECURITY POLICIES.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS I HAVE MENTIONED ARE JUST A FEW OF WHAT WE HAVE DONE AS A TEAM, WITH EVERYONE CONTRIBUTING TO OUR EFFORTS. IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE WHAT WE CAN DO, I ENCOURAGE YOU TO



SUPPORT THE AMENDMENT TO THE **NATIONAL DEFENSE ACT** SO WE CAN BETTER FULFILL OUR MANDATE OF PRESERVING PEACE IN OUR LAND, GUARDING THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF OUR 7,107 ISLANDS, AIR AND SEAS; GUARANTEE A MORE COMFORTABLE LIFE FOR OUR PEOPLE AND ENSURE A BETTER FUTURE FOR OUR YOUTH. THESE ARE ALL EMBODIED IN THE **PHILIPPINE DEFENSE TRANSFORMATION ROADMAP**.

AS PART OF OUR ONE DEFENSE TEAM, I ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE RESERVE OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS OR ROTC TO INSTILL LOVE OF COUNTRY, INCULCATE DISCIPLINE, DEVELOP LEADERSHIP AND GOOD CITIZENSHIP IN THE FILIPINO YOUTH.

TO OUR CIVILIAN CONSTITUENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT, LET US JOIN AND SUPPORT THE RESERVE FORCE OF OUR ARMED FORCES SO OUR COUNTRY CAN MAKE USE OF YOUR INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE IN VARIOUS FIELDS.

LET OUR DEFENSE ORGANIZATION BE A KEY PLAYER IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION, A FORMIDABLE PARTNER IN NATION-BUILDING, TRUSTED AND RELIED ON BY OUR PEOPLE.

WITH THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF EACH AND EVERY SOLDIER AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL, WE CAN



COLLECTIVELY MAKE THE **DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE** A PARTNER TOWARDS PEACEFUL AND PROGRESSIVE PHILIPPINES.”

THANK YOU VERY MUCH! HAPPY ANNIVERSARY AND AGAIN, A BLESSED DAY TO ALL!

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