

Presidential Communications Operations Office

Presidential News Desk

**SPEECH OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE DURING THE PHILIPPINE NAVY
CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY**

[Delivered at the Philippine Navy Headquarters in Manila | 03 February 2020]

If you can just... Kindly sit down.

I have requested... [Hilahin mo lang 'yung... How can I die if you keep on covering me.]

Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps; National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and other members of the Cabinet; Lieutenant General Felimon Santos Jr., Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; former Flag Officer-in-Command Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad; the newly installed Flag Officer-in-Command Rear Admiral Giovanni Carlo Bacordo; officers and enlisted personnel of the Philippine Navy; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen; and may I add to all of the Armed Forces of the Philippines who are here.

I am glad to take part in honoring Admiral Robert Empedrad for his successful tour of duty as Flag Officer-in-Command of the Philippine Navy.

Your tenure at the helm of our navy will be remembered for fostering a dependable and credible naval force that our maritime nation can truly be proud of.

Let me take this occasion to acknowledge your more than three decades of professional career in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. And on behalf of a grateful nation, I thank you for your remarkable service, sir. [applause]

Under your leadership, we have increased our naval presence in Philippine waters, deterring various threats to our territorial integrity, defending our sovereignty from foreign elements, maintaining peace and order in Mindanao during Martial Law, and protecting our people against terrorism, smuggling and human trafficking.

Your most recent efforts in spearheading humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations for our compatriots working in Iran and those affected by the eruption of Taal Volcano vividly attest to your faithful adherence to military professionalism and selfless dedication to duty.

I also recognize your full support for our AFP Modernization Program which seeks to provide our men and women in uniform the necessary equipment and skills to excel in their role as defenders of this nation.

As the Philippine Navy sails [forward] under a new leadership, I trust that you, the officers and personnel of our Navy, will rally behind your incoming Flag Officer-in-Command, Rear Admiral Giovanni Carlo Bacordo. Under his leadership, may you all remain steadfast in protecting our country against all threats in the seas.

Admiral Bacordo, I am confident that our Navy under your leadership will continue to achieve more milestones in the campaign to protect the freedoms and democratic values that we hold dear. It is my hope you will become the embodiment of integrity and valor as you lead your Navy in securing the seas and the future of our land.

Let me assure you that you will have my full support and this administration will always assist in enhancing the capabilities of the men and women of the Philippine Navy as we pursue a more peaceful future for all.

Together, let us embody solidarity as we sail on towards a more stable and a prosperous society.

I thank you for your service at mabuhay tayong lahat. Thank you. [applause]

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