

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE DURING THE AFP CHANGE OF
COMMAND AND RETIREMENT CEREMONY IN HONOR OF GENERAL GILBERT ITALIA
GAPAY, PA**

[Delivered at the Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo in Quezon City | 04 February 2021]

Kindly sit down. Thank you.

[Sir, with your permission.] [laughter]

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and other members of the Cabinet; Senator Bong Go; Outgoing AFP Chief of Staff General Gilbert Gapay; New AFP Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Cirilito Sobejana; Philippine National Police Chief Police General Debold Sinas; Philippine Navy Flag Officer-in-Command Vice Admiral Giovanni Bacordo; the officers, enlisted personnel and civilian employees of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; mga kasama ko sa gobyerno; mga kababayan.

Let me extend my warmest congratulations to General Gilbert Gapay for your successful tour of duty as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. [applause]

Sir, after tonight you might want --- you might opt to take the MSW --- MWSS vacated by [applause] General Salamat or you might also choose to be with your --- in your home ground the DND. It's your choice.

During your tenure, you have commendably steered the men and women of the AFP towards our goal of eliminating insurgency and securing our sovereignty.

When our nation faced a daunting public health crisis last year, you inspired your troops to risk their lives to contain the pandemic and providing essential humanitarian assistance to our people.

Your example of hard work and excellence has set a high standard not only for you and those around you, but most especially for the institution's future leadership, the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

I join the rest in wishing you all the best as you begin a new chapter in your life's journey. May this bring you and your family a new path to happiness and purpose in your years ahead.

On this note, I enjoin our troops, under the leadership of the incoming Chief of Staff, to continue being vigilant and proactive in performing your duties.

I am confident that under Lieutenant General Sobejana's leadership, the AFP will achieve even more milestones in its campaign to address insurgency and terror, and put an end to all these threats to our national security.

It is my hope that this new beginning will ensure a more fruitful collaboration as we strive to be a source of great moral strength for our people.

To our troops, be assured of the government's full support for the promotion of your improved welfare, as well as the upgrading of your capabilities in securing the safety of our people.
[applause]

As keepers of peace and order, you are instrumental in building a safe environment where our people can live without fear from lawless elements.

Through our joint efforts in building the road to recovery during the pandemic, I am confident that we will move closer in achieving our shared aspirations for a better and stronger Philippines.

Mabuhay kayong lahat! [applause]

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