

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PHILIPPINE PART IN THE
FIRST CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE WORLD**

[Delivered at the Veterans Park Calicoan Island in Guiuan, Eastern Samar |
18 March 2021]

Kindly sit down. Thank you.

Spain Ambassador to the Philippines His Excellency Jorge Moragas Sanchez; Labor and Employment Secretary Silvestre Bello; Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Secretary Salvador Panelo; Presidential Assistant for the Visayas Michael Lloyd Dino; Senator Bong Go; Eastern Samar Lone District Representative Maria Fe Abunda; Eastern Samar Governor Evardone, si Ben; Guiuan Town Mayor Annaliza Gonzales-Kwan; the other officers of the Mayors' League; Philippine Postal Corporation Chairman Normal Fulgencio; mga kasama sa gobyerno; mga minamahal kong kababayan.

I would have opted to deliver a longer speech. It's only two-page. And I would have wanted to talk about this particular journey to the team that arrived here many years ago.

I join you today as we celebrate the [500th] anniversary of the arrival of the Magellan-Elcano expedition in the Philippines, which is one of the most important parts of humanity's first circumnavigation of the globe.

The event marked our ancestors' first contact with the Spaniards – and an opportunity for our forebears to show their unity, magnanimity, and sovereignty to our foreign guests.

In Homonhon, our ancestors exemplified the unique generosity of the Filipino when they helped the Spaniards expedition's depleted crew upon their arrival.

A few days later, in the Battle of Mactan, Lapulapu and his warriors – in an exemplary display of firm leadership and extraordinary courage – defeated and drove away the colonials.

I hope that as we commemorate these events that shaped our history five centuries ago, we may reinvigorate the historical and socio-civic consciousness of the Filipino, especially among the new generations.

Let us therefore all take part in the 2021 Quincentennial Commemorations slated this year so that we may bring our history, culture, and traditions closer to our hearts.

Indeed, history should make us reflect on the past and look beyond our future. We should therefore honor those who have toiled so that we may become a nation we are today – modern, progressive, and ever thriving.

And while the events that we celebrate would therefore lead to the beginning of colonization, the Filipino people can find relief in the knowledge that we have gone far in our efforts to correct the mistakes of the past.

As inheritors of this complicated yet glorious past, the duty now rests on our shoulders to continue the aspirations of our forebears.

I therefore call on all our kababayans to appreciate our rich history and learn from the experiences of those that came before us so that we may never again allow any other tribe to compromise our sovereignty --- invaders who would come and who would stay here and contribute to the richness of our culture and of course in the way how we live.

It says here thank you at mabuhay ang sambayang Pilipino. Wala na man, okay. *[laughter]* That's the speech.

Usually the Presidential Staff would prepare a speech ano lang maigsi lang. I want to go to extemporaneous but this is not the time.

It is enough that we are here upon the invitation of the Governor. I forgot to greet all of you. This is a historic event. And though they may somehow --- we may differ in our interpretation, but the fact is that we are here and that contributed something that was good for our country.

I do not have anything about religion but what was really planted here was the sword and the cross of Christianity. Hindi na bale `yan tatal dumaan na `yan. That we may remember their kindness and their bravery --- to extol on their bravery to make this hazardous journey that completed the circumvention of the world.

They conquered history and until now we are also celebrating because it was the first time that we saw foreigners in our native land. That alone speaks

volume of stories but we are also conscious of the fact that it was the reality of the moment at that time.

So we thank everybody, the ancestors of the Spaniards who came here. And we hope that this event goes further --- fortify our relations with the Spaniards.

Maraming salamat po. *[speaks off mic]*

To the Governor, I had to do this trip to just see for myself what beautiful island you have. Napakaganda ho na sa taas titingnan ang ano ninyo. *[applause]*

There's a beautiful place like the beautiful people who are here na nakikita ko. Again, maraming salamat at we have to fly to Tacloban for another tête-à-tête something like... I'd like to talk to the rebels there. Dito, I will have the time, I may come back someday para sa ibang program na.

But this time, I would focus my presence and my narratives not against the NPAs but rather I would talk if we can find a sense of what we are really fighting for or against government.

Maraming salamat po. *[applause]*

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