

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE 123RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF PHILIPPINE
INDEPENDENCE**

**[Delivered at the General Gregorio del Pilar Monument, Provincial Capitol Grounds in
Malolos City, Bulacan | 12 June 2021]**

Magsiupo po kayo. [Is that right? Is that a Tagalog --- ?]

You know it is my --- part of the program is my duty to acknowledge the presence of civilians and officials of government alike including the military.

Distinguished members of the executive branch led by Chief Presidential Legal Adviser Salvador Panelo, Secretary Panelo, can you stand up? Hindi ka nila kilala eh; Senator Bong Go; Bulacan 1st District Representative Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado; Bulacan 2nd District Representative Gavini Pancho; Bulacan 3rd District Representative Lorna Silverio; Bulacan 4th District Representative Florida Robes --- karaming representante ito --- AFP Chief of Staff Cirilito Sobejana, my idol.

Isang idol ko itong dalawa pero mas --- maliit pa ako talagang ‘yong binabasa natin lumaki akong humahanga nito. I would have really --- mag-segue ako ha --- I would have wanted to go to Tirad Pass to give honor to Gregorio del Pilar. The problem was they said it’s too far. Tirad Pass is somewhere in Ilocos Norte and we would have a hard time going there because of its distance. Gusto ko sanang pumunta talaga doon kung saan ‘yong Tirad Pass na ‘yon. I was kind of enamored by the story of Gregorio del Pilar kaya lumaki ako na nagmamahal ng isang Pilipino na magiting, isog sa Bisaya, at a hero of our nation.

PNP Chief Police General Guillermo Eleazar; Bulacan Governor Daniel Fernando, sir; Bulacan Vice [Governor] Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado; [marami may second page pa] aabutin tayo ng mga alas-singko nito pero okay lang? [laughter] Malolos City Mayor Gilbert Gatchalian; Meycauayan City Mayor Linabelle Villarica; San Jose del Monte City Mayor Arthur Robes; Balagtas Municipal Mayor Eladio Gonzales Jr.; Bulakan Municipal Mayor Vergel Meneses; Bustos Municipal Mayor Francis Albert Juan --- baka hindi siya nakapunta, maulan eh; Guiguinto Municipal Mayor Ambrosio Cruz; Norzagaray Municipal Mayor Alfredo Germar; Obando Municipal Mayor Edwin Santos; Pandi Municipal Mayor Enrico Roque; Paombong Municipal Mayor Mary [Anne] Marcos; Pulilan Municipal Mayor Maria Rosario Montejo; National Historical Commission of the Philippines Chairman Dr. Rene Escalante; mga Bulakenyo; mula sa bayan ng mga bayani; mga minamahal kong kababayan; mas mabuti kayo dito sa Luzon punong-puno kayo sa mga hero. Sa amin sa Mindanao kontra, kontrabida lahat, p***. [laughter]

With pride and joy, I join all Filipinos here in the Philippines and around the world as we celebrate the 123rd Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence.

Sinadya ko ho ‘yan kasi without offending anybody Maynila lang kasi ako palagi nag-raise ng flag. I thought that I would in my time as many as I can celebrate it with the people where, saan ang hometown nila. Last year, I went to the place in Malabang, Lanao del Sur where our --- I consider also a national hero, Jose Abad Santos... He was beheaded by the Japanese imperial army for refusing to pledge allegiance to the Japanese flag. And as the story goes, iyong anak niya sabi niya “Tay, magsaludo ka na lang tutal wala naman ‘yan. Matapos rin itong giyera na ito.” And his reply to his son was that “Son, you should not cry, you should be happy. You should be happy for me for not every Filipino is given the rare opportunity to die for his country.” Kaya ako pumunta doon sa medyo gubat na, it was in Malabang. Pumunta talaga ako doon, I insisted that I go there para to raise the flag and to say a little prayer for him. Talagang saludo ako sa mga Pilipino na ganoon kasi baka hindi ko kaya. Kaya ako talagang ganoon na lang ang tingin ko sa ating mga kababayan.

More than a century ago, our heroes fought valiantly to liberate our country from the yoke of foreign oppression. The Province of Bulacan is proud to call two of these heroes as their own – General Gregorio S. del Pilar and Marcelo H. del Pilar.

Marcelo H. del Pilar was a genius in the realm of arts and letters. Under the pen name “Plaridel,” he wrote fiery editorials that exposed the atrocities and injustices of the colonizers.

Gen. Gregorio del Pilar, on the other hand, was hailed as the “Hero of Tirad Pass” – a true patriot who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our young republic.

It is just fitting that, more than a century since their exploits, these two sons of Bulacan continue to inspire succeeding generations of Filipinos to cherish the liberties and freedoms that they bled and fought for.

I therefore consider it a great honor to bestow upon them – through their kin who are with us today – the Order of Lapu-Lapu, in recognition of their extraordinary acts of heroism that served as the foundation of this nation. [applause]

On behalf of the Filipino people, allow me to convey our heartfelt gratitude to General Gregorio del Pilar and Gat Marcelo H. del Pilar. Maraming pong salamat sa inyong dalawa! [applause]

I urge my Filipino --- my kababayans, my countrymen, to honor their legacy through small acts of heroism, especially during this difficult time when we are facing a global crisis.

As we commemorate this year’s Independence Day, let us honor our modern-day heroes – our healthcare workers, law enforcement officers, and other frontliners who have been instrumental in our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the past year, they have risked their own lives and sacrificed their own comfort and security to ensure that our society will continue to function despite this crisis. Maraming pong salamat sa inyong pagmalasakit at serbisyo.

The Philippines has indeed come a long way since the time of the heroes we honor today. We are now a nation that is modern, progressive, and ever thriving.

However, our continued progress will only be possible if we have a strong understanding and appreciation of the liberties that we enjoy today.

Let us move forward in solidarity and give greater meaning to the freedom that our forebears achieved for us 123 years ago.

Before I forget, itong --- mayroon tayong Wall of Heroes at pumayag naman ang – thank you for the gratuitous consent – pumayag ang Armed Forces na magtayo tayo ng Wall of Heroes diyan sa, I think, Libingan ng mga Bayani.

At lahat ‘yong namatay na mga doktor, mga nurses, ‘yong mga attendants na nahawa ng COVID will be honored by their name inscribed in that wall. It is now being built. [applause] And I’d like to thank the Armed Forces of the Philippines for their pagmalasakit sa kapwa Pilipino.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay ang malayang Pilipino! [applause]

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