

SPEECH OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE INSPECTION OF THE NEWLY COMPLETED TERMINAL
BUILDING OF THE CLARK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

[Delivered at the Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga | 17 July 2021]

Kindly sit down. Thank you.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; Vice President Vicente Sotto *[laughter]* - -- ah Senate President; House Speaker Lord Allan Jay Velasco; Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea; Senator Bong Go; French Ambassador to the Philippines Michèle Boccoz; Labor and Employment Secretary Silvestre Bello; Health Secretary Francisco Duque; Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon Lopez; Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat; Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade; Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi; Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr.; Presidential Spokesperson Secretary Harry Roque; Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Secretary [Salvador] Panelo; Presidential Assistant for the Visayas Michael Lloyd [Dino]; Metro Manila Development Authority Chairman Benjamin Abalos Jr.; Bases Conversion and Development Authority Secretary Vivencio Dizon; Senator Sherwin Gatchalian... *[I see another Gatchalian here, there were two of them. Wes Gatchalian, yeah.]*

Pampanga 2nd District Representative Juan Miguel Macapagal-Arroyo; Pampanga 3rd District Representative Aurelio Gonzales Jr.; Pampanga 4th District Representative Juan Pablo "Rimpy" Bondoc; Valenzuela City 1st [District Representative] Weslie Gatchalian; Secretary... *[How do you address him?]* Pampanga Governor Dennis Pineda and other provincial governors; Pampanga Vice Governor Lilia Pineda; [Mabalacat] Mayor Crisostomo Garbo; Angeles City Mayor Carmelo Lazatin Jr.; [Manila City Mayor] Francisco Moreno Domagoso and the other city and municipal mayors; the Chief of Police Guillermo Eleazar and the other members of the military who are here; fellow workers of government; ladies and gentlemen.

That --- that is the first part of my speech. *[laughter]* I am only allowed 10 minutes. So that's five minutes? I have here two pages. It was prepared by the staff, it's not mine.

It is my pleasure to be with you all as we inspect the New Terminal Building of Clark International Airport.

You know, mag-segue ako. Looking at this beautiful edifice --- I was coming here from the tarmac --- I could almost not believe my eyes that another beautiful building, one after the other, built by Arthur Tugade.

You know, Arthur Tugade was our class valedictorian in the law school. But he was already an officer of the Delgado Shipping. And by the time we were classmates in fourth year, he was already a billionaire. Maraming pera si Art.

You know why I got Art? It has been my misfortune in life that --- really, may mga tao talaga, maybe slow learner or talagang mahina ang utak, but from high school to college, my standard grade was 75. And I graduated from high school almost eight years, going nine.

So I was not an achiever. But you know, the imponderables of life has a way of changing things, I became a mayor. And for 23 years I was there in Davao, then four years as congressman, then another four years as vice mayor of my daughter, and unto the presidency.

Wala masyado akong... You know, I was a trial fiscal. Kung tanungin mo ako about the penal laws, I could give you everything that you need to know, but hanggang diyan lang ako. My forte actually was criminal law. And so for all of the things before I became vi --- mayor, vice mayor, mayor, I was coasting along. It took me, I said, plus three years to graduate from high school.

Noong na-Presidente ako, wala masyadong --- when I became President, I knew the --- the meager things in the gray matter between the ears, not so much about the technical, but I was a trial fiscal, a prosecutor. So hanggang diyan lang ako.

Then when I went to school, met some guys, bright guys, I was left behind by five years, they were already lawyers, I was still struggling with the bar examinations.

When I finally got to be in the law school, `yung --- our class was star-studded. We had two justices of the Supreme Court; three of the top 10 during the bar exams were from San Beda; and --- lahat kami.

So I choose the --- when I became mayor, I got the valedictorian during our grade school days. It was --- he was a valedictorian from Kindergarten up to wherever he graduate from the United States. Sena --- si Secretary Dominguez. Then Arthur Tugade and some --- and another bright guy.

So when I choose my Cabinet members, I choose Ben --- si Ben, talagang mautak `yan. Si... Lahat. Almost all of them or half of them were really cum laude and summa.

I was the only one with a hanging 40 --- 74. So noong na-Presidente ako, I choose the brightest, the best among my classmates, all valedictorians, half of them, and Tugade was one of them.

So noong nakita ko 'yung ginawa niya, my flashback in my mind was I was never wrong in choosing him. But what is really very tragic is that Sonny Dominguez, the brightest there, ano pa 'yan "voice of democracy champion", all of them including Berna, magna cum laude from UP. But you know what, in one of the meetings there were a conundrum of conversations, tumingin lang ako sa kanila at ngayon pagdating ko dito tumingin ako, trabaho ito ni Tugade. So I was not --- I was never wrong in choosing him.

Berna; Ben Diokno, the Central Bank Governor; Sal, who has also a brilliant mind, sometimes his attire is funny but that's what he is. He likes it that way so...

You know what, I was just looking at them talking, all magna cum laude, cum laude, isip-isip ko, "wala man 'to". Their efforts are to me is nothing. You know why? All of them, magna cum laude, cum laude, were all workers of mine in the Cabinet, trabahante ko lang sila.

So that is how this building came about. I talked to Tugade and said, "Improve all the airports." Now, in the Philippines, lahat ng airports sa ano sa labas nila is to improve the airports.

So I will continue.

I am pleased that this New Terminal Building can accommodate eight million passengers a year --- kung pupunta sila dito. This is twice the airport's current average capacity of more than four million passengers per year. I just hope that the local economy can absorb the number of people coming to visit the Philippines.

It will surely help decongest traffic at the busy Ninoy [Aquino] International Airport and provide a better flying experience for locals and tourists alike.

I commend the Department of Transportation, the Bases Conversion and Development Authority and all our partners from the private sector for this massive achievement.

We are thankful that another major component of this administration's "Build, Build, Build" Program is ready [to] benefit our people.

The structure before us reflects the administration's unyielding commitment to improve the quality of life of every Filipino by providing big ticket infrastructure projects such as this that will improve connectivity, mobility, create jobs, and disperse economic activity to the regions.

This development will also certainly boost economic growth in North and Central Luzon and provide these regions their own gateway to the rest of the Philippines and the world.

As we continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and adapt to a new normal, may we all look forward to a safer, easier, and more comfortable travel experience here at the Clark International Airport.

Once again, congratulations, at maraming salamat sa inyong lahat.

Well, I have an added --- I'd like to mention Ben Diokno, he was my Budget and then he became my --- our Central Bank Governor. Mayor Vico Sotto of Pasay City --- ah Pasig City; Mayor Lino Cayetano, Taguig City; Mayor Francis Zamora, San Juan City; and Mayor Rex Gatchalian, Valenzuela City. *[applause]*

Mabuhay kayong lahat. Puro marurunong 'to. So with this kind of brainwork power, the Philippines can never go wrong, except the politicians.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The security says I have to go, the plane is there waiting, I'm going home to Davao. But before that, I --- as my usual, I'd always defer to the people out of respect. *[applause]*

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