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SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE 126TH PHILIPPINE ARMY (PA) FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

[Delivered at the Philippine Army Grandstand, Lawton Avenue in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City | 22 March 2023]

Thank you very much to Acting SND Charlie Galvez for your kind introduction. *[Before we begin, the troop commander will give the command of tikas pahinga.]*

Our National Security Adviser Secretary Ed Año; the members of the Diplomatic Corps, their Excellencies; the members of our legislature here today; the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines General Andy Centino; Commanding General of the Philippine Army Lieutenant General Romeo Brawner Jr.; the officers, enlisted men and women of the Philippine Army; my fellow workers in government; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

We are gathered here today to commemorate the institution that serves as the defenders of our land and of our people.

Through the years, the Philippine Army has shown patriotism and bravery that allowed our country to succeed and thrive in its pursuit of peace, of stability, and of democracy.

The entire nation is grateful for the many sacrifices our ground troops have made to ensure our internal security.

Some of us have lost friends and families in the fight for peace, but we will continue to ensure that their sacrifices will not have been in vain.

We have come to a point in our country's history when a half-a-century's fight with insurgents is coming to an end. This would not only bring peace to our nation but would also help development and improve the lives of every Filipino.

With the declining numbers of the Communist Terrorist Group, we must now recalibrate our military approach. As our ground troops, you have done the difficult part of clearing our communities of internal security threats. You must now continue being the catalyst to their surrender and disarmament.

However, we are now undertaking an even more challenging mission—one that is not yours to carry alone. Addressing the root causes of insurgency will entail a whole-of-nation approach.

Take on the task of peacemakers—work with the national government agencies, the civil society groups, the private sector, and the communities themselves in keeping the peace.

It is a critical task as it is only through achieving internal security that we will be able to foster development and address equally important security concerns.

It now behooves upon you to ensure that these areas will not fall onto the hands of those who intend to sow fear, discontent, and terror.

As we navigate the challenges of the 21st century, we need to protect the younger Filipinos who will eventually inherit your legacy and lead the country. Actively take part in molding the Filipino youth to be responsible citizens, to be patriotic leaders.

The external security environment is becoming more complex, it is becoming more unpredictable.

While advancements in technology have facilitated greater interaction among states, amongst economies, and peoples, resulting in better development outcomes, it has also created conditions that will dictate the future of warfare.

That is why the Army must always be fully prepared and capable for any contingencies, especially considering you are the country's last line of defense against any external security threat. Be vigilant against elements that will undermine our hard-earned peace, our hard-earned stability.

Continue to improve your relations with your counterparts overseas. Common security challenges necessitate a more concerted approach among like-minded nations. Share information, learn from the best practices in the region to make our military better.

To the army leadership, I am aware that the emerging threat to our territory and our emphasis on addressing this threat requires adjustments in our strategies. But I am confident that the Philippine Army, which has more than a century of experience, will be able to rise up to the task as it has always done.

As your Commander-in-Chief, I am assuring you that we remain committed to modernizing the Armed Forces so no threat will be impossible to handle. *[applause]*

We will continue to invest not only in modern equipment and material but also in your training, so you can keep abreast of concepts, doctrines, [and] strategies that we now need in the modern battlefield.

This is a glorious day to celebrate the achievements of the Philippine Army. Take pride in the fact that you carry on your shoulders the force of a hundred [million] Filipinos fighting for a better future.

As our country's defenders, you are always the first to heed the call to serve, and never the ones to surrender. *[applause]*

I know that you march towards the battlefield not only to safeguard our beloved motherland and our future. But you also do it because you know in your very hearts that what you are doing is honorable, what you are doing is just, and what you are doing is right.

March on, Philippine Army. Once again, happy 126th anniversary to the Philippine Army! *[applause]*

Mabuhay po kayong lahat! Mabuhay po ang Philippine Army! Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat.

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