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PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

AT THE 128TH PHILIPPINE ARMY FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY

[Delivered at the Headquarters, Philippine Army, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City | 22 March 2025]

Thank you to our National Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro for your kind introduction.

[Please be seated.]

The Special Assistant to the President, Secretary Anton Lagdameo; the National Security Council Secretary Ed Año; and honorable members of the Cabinet that are here present.

Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines, General Romeo Brawner; the major service commanders; Commanding General of the Philippine Army, Lieutenant General Roy Galido; the officers and enlisted men and women of the Philippine Army; my fellow workers in government; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

At the outset, let me congratulate the Philippine Army on its Founding Anniversary!

For 128 years, the Philippine Army has stood as a pillar of strength and of stability.

In its more than century-long history, this institution has defended our nation, our Constitution, and ensured the safety of our people.

Through every trial—whether in combat, in crisis, or in calamity—the Army has remained faithful to its duty.

From strengthening our operations to enhancing our ability to detect, respond to, and recover from threats, it has played a vital role in fortifying our nation's security.

Beyond the battlefield, our soldiers have once again shown that their service extends far beyond just defense. Whether responding to natural calamities or assisting communities affected by the recent volcanic activities such as what happens in Taal and the Kanlaon volcanoes, they were our first

responders. They have proven themselves to be ready, reliable, and resolute in their sworn oath to their duty to our people.

If excellence is to be measured, let the record speak for itself: a perfect score in policy and facility assessments during the General Security of Military Information Agreement evaluation. Clear proof of their adherence to international standards, readiness to surpass any obstacle, and the determination to guard our nation's future.

This is not a small feat.

Ours is a world that continues to evolve. Threats have grown increasingly more complex, and the battleground is no longer contained in land—it now extends into cyberspace and beyond.

The challenges demand greater adaptability, greater discipline, and further commitment to the nation's security and progress.

And yet, through all this, the Philippine Army has never wavered.

Sa panahon ngayon, hindi sapat ang tapang at husay ng isang sundalo. Kinakailangan ang [paninindigang] hindi natitinag sa harap ng pagsubok, ang prinsipyong hindi nababaluktot ng takot o pangamba, at ang pusong laging handa maglingkod nang tapat at walang hinihintay na kapalit.

Sa anumang institusyon, hindi sapat ang ranggo o kapangyarihan. Ang tunay na sukatan ay ang kahandaang na isantabi ang sariling interes para [sa] mas mataas na layunin. Bagama't iba iba tayo ng papel na ginagampanan, dapat mangibabaw ang ating adhikaing bumuo ng mas nagkakaisa, mas makatarungan, at tunay na mapayapang bansa.

As we mark the 128th Founding Anniversary, we are again reminded why we choose to serve. We do it not for ourselves, but also for the countless generations that will come after us.

Every Filipino wants their children to grow up in a country where they are safe, where they have access to quality education, and where they can build a future that has opportunities awaiting.

We all dream of a nation steady in its calm and brave enough to face whatever tomorrow might bring.

And that is why this Administration remains committed to ensuring that the Philippine Army is always ready to fulfill its mission.

We are equipping you with the arsenal to champion our rights and protect our national interests.

For one, we recently conducted the second iteration of the Combined Arms Training Exercise or CATEX *Katihan*, with six 6,000 troops testing their skills in very complex operations. These exercises are crucial in sharpening our combat readiness and strengthening our ability to respond effectively to any threat.

We are also reinforcing our welfare programs for our troops because those who dedicate their lives to serve the country must be supported.

These programs include the Mandatory Annual Physical Examination, Reimbursement of Hospital Expenses, and the MOWEL Support for Wounded-in-Action Personnel. We have also streamlined the processes to ensure that these benefits reach our people faster.

Additionally, I have issued Executive Order No. 84 to increase the subsistence allowance of all the officers and personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Hinahangad po nating makatulong -- makakatulong ito sa pagpapabuti at pangangalaga ng kapakanan ng ating mga sundalo at ang kanilang mga pamilya. Isang dekada na po ang nakalipas mula noong huling tumaas ang kanilang allowance, kaya't sinisikap po natin na makagawa kaagad ng makabuluhang programa kagaya nito.

Bagama't walang makakapantay sa sakripisyong kanilang ginagawa para sa ating bansa, umaasa naman kami na maaalalayan kayo natin -- namin upang magampanan ninyo nang mas mabuti ang inyong mga tungkulin.

Kagaya ng pagsusulong ninyo ng karapatan ng sambayanan at ng kapayapaan ng ating pamayanan, handa po kaming maging sandigan ninyo lalo na sa oras ng pangangailangan.

These efforts are part of a broader vision: a nation where Filipinos no longer need to worry about their safety, where they can build a more dignified lives for themselves and for their families.

When peace and order are in place, we can pursue knowledge, we can work towards prosperity, and we can contribute to our country's progress.

To achieve this, the government must lead by example. We strive for a government that listens, that acts, and serves with integrity. That is the only way to rise above adversities and move forward as a people.

To Lieutenant General Roy Galido, your leadership continues to inspire the men and women under your command. Your standard of excellence ensures that the Philippine Army remains worthy of our people's trust and respect.

To all the soldiers with us today, thank you for your service. I congratulate our exemplary awardees as well, who have gone above and beyond their call of duty.

As your Commander-in-Chief, I enjoin you to stay relentless in your pursuit for excellence. Sharpen your skills, master your craft, embrace innovation.

After all, the Philippine Army's strength extends beyond firepower. It draws from its personnel's honor, integrity, and fortitude.

Ladies and gentlemen, the road ahead is not easy. There will be delays, frustrations, and challenges as they always are. Our strength and resolve will continue to be tested.

But I have no doubt, the Philippine Army will stand the best, will stand firm, as it always has in the past 128 years.

Together, let us ensure that the next generations will inherit a *Bagong Pilipinas* that is peaceful, progressive, and full of promise.

Maraming salamat.

Mabuhay ang Hukbong Katihan ng Pilipinas!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas!

[applause]

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