

Welcome Remarks of  
VADM ALEXANDER P PAMA AFP  
Flag Officer In Command, PN

**Arrival Ceremony of the BRP DEL PILAR (PF15)**

23 August 2011

*Amenities...*

Magandang umaga po sa ating lahat.

Mga kababayan, ako po at ang buong hukbong dagat ay naniniwala na ang araw pong ito ay isang napakahalagang araw. Ngayong umaga po ay ating nasaksihan ang pagdating at pagdaong dito sa Maynila ng ngayon ay ang pinakamalaki at pinakabagong kuhang barko ng ating Hukbong Dagat. Ito ay isang napakahalagang umaga sa kasaysayan ng ating Hukbong Dagat sa kadahilanang ngayon po ay naisakatuparan na natin ang unang pinakamalaki at mahalagang hakbang tungo sa pagtupad ng ating mithiing maging isang malakas at kapanipaniwalang Hukbong Dagat na maipagmamalaki n gating bansa.

Malinaw pa po sa ating ala-ala ang mga huling katagang nasabi ko sa aking talumpati nuong ako ay itinalaga ng ating mahal na Pangulo, bilang Flag Officer In Command nuong Enero nitong kasalukuyang taon.

Ang nasabi ko po nuon sa bandang dulo ng aking aking talumpati, at uulitin ko, "Dito po sa inyong Hukbong Dagat, kami po ay nangangarap,... at ang aming pangarap ay magaganap." Mga kababayan, sa araw pong ito, sa tulong at kagustuhan ng ating panauhing pandagal, ang mahal na Pangulong Aquino, ang aming pangarap ay nagumpisa nang maganap.

Today, we are at a significant waypoint for our Navy in its voyage towards its destination that it is envisioned that by 2020, we will be a strong and credible Navy that our maritime nation can be proud of.

Your Navy, with the full support of our Guest of Honor, His Excellency, President Aquino has begun to realize its vision. And we are grateful for having President Aquino here today to lead us. The Navy and the entire country in welcoming the newest and biggest addition to our fleet, - the Barko ng Republika ng Pilipinas (BRP GREGORIO DEL PILAR).

And on behalf of the men and women, the sailors and marines of the Philippine Navy, I warmly welcome each and every one of you to this auspicious occasion! Also, please allow me to welcome and commend our gallant sailors – the officers and ratings of BRP Del Pilar for your outstanding performance in bringing her safely to her new home, the Republic of the Philippines. My shipmates, I am so proud of you and Bravo Zulu for an excellent accomplishment of your mission.

As a bit of history of this ship, the acquisition by the Philippine government of BRP Del Pilar – a Weather High Endurance Cutter – was relentlessly pursued and championed by his Excellency, President Aquino himself. From the very start and all throughout the various phases of the acquisition, to the extent that President Aquino himself would constantly ask me and follow us up on the status of our acquisition of this ship. This, ladies and gentlemen showed in no uncertain terms how serious and focused we were and still are – led by the President no less – in our pursuit to upgrade and strengthen our Navy's capability.

Acquired from the United States Coast Guard through the US government's excess defense article program and the untiring support and assistance of our friends at the US

Embassy here in Manila led by his Excellency Ambassador Harry Thomas. . Sir, thank you for your help... Our government utilized the Department of Energy's Malampaya Project Funds to augment to acquire the BRP del Pilar. Now, here she is, standing tall – and shall soon steam off – to undertake tasks and missions and as a fitting symbol of our resolve at modernizing the Armed Forces.

Thanks to the Philippine Government's unyielding support and assistance to this worthy venture of the Navy, the AFP, and the defense department. If at all, this directly impinges on the President's and the entire government's policy of treading the *Daang Matuwid*, which all the more sets the tone of transparent government acquisitions of big ticket items in accord with our country's goal of peace and development for our people.

For us in the Navy, the arrival and addition of this man of war to our Navy's fleet is doubly significant.

First, it comes at a time where the demands of our operational requirements require a vessel of her capabilities especially in our efforts to intensify our government's efforts at protecting our exclusive economic zone. In particular, BRP del Pilar has the capability to conduct missions in maritime areas where sea conditions demand only vessels with her capability. Such capabilities are highly vital in securing our maritime nation's territorial integrity and assert our sovereignty specifically in our maritime areas where her capabilities are now urgently needed.

The other significance of BRP Del Pilar for us is that she now serves as the symbol and icon of our efforts in our capability upgrade and modernization efforts. It is now easy for us to visualize in a realistic form, what was before an abstraction that is capability upgrade and eventually, modernization. She now symbolizes the revival of the Philippine Navy as the *Primus Inter Pares* in the defense of our maritime nation. We are ever conscious and aware however that even as we rejoice in her joining our fleet, we also acknowledge the challenges this brings to further improve our existing systems on human resources, doctrines, operations, logistics, basing, and other support services. Rest assured ladies and gentlemen that your Navy will be up to these challenges and in no time at all, we shall set into motion your Navy's capacity and capability to continue accomplishing its mandated mission, and ultimately attain its vision, that of being strong and credible that our maritime nation can be proud of by the year 2020.

Mr. President, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, let me again welcome you to this momentous occasion even as I lead the Philippine Navy in warmly welcoming and saluting the BRP Del Pilar and her complement on her arrival here today.

Once again, a warm Navy welcome to all of you and a great Fleet-Marine morning to all of us!

Maraming Salamat po!