

# **THE 113<sup>TH</sup> FOUNDATION ANNIVERSARY OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY**

**Message of Secretary Voltaire T. Gazmin**

**24 MAY 2011 (Monday)/ 0900 hours  
Naval Station Jose Andrada, Philippine Navy  
2335 Roxas Blvd, Manila**

THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF OUR ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES, GENERAL EDUARDO OBAN, JR; MRS. OBAN, THE FLAG OFFICER IN COMMAND OF OUR PHILIPPINE NAVY AND OUR GRACIOUS HOST IN THIS FESTIVE CEREMONY, VICE ADMIRAL ALEXANDER PAMA; MRS. PAMA; THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF OUR PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE, LTGEN OSCAR RABENA; THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF OUR PHILIPPINE ARMY, LTGEN ARTURO ORTIZ; THE VICE ADMIRAL LIWAG OF COAST GUARD, OUR GUESTS FROM THE PNP, FORMER FOICs, SENIOR OFFICERS OF OUR ARMED FORCES; DISTINGUISHED GUESTS; OUR AWARDEES WHO WE HONOR TODAY FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE SERVICE OF OUR NAVY, OUR ARMED FORCES, AND THE FILIPINO NATION; THE INDUSTRIOUS AND PATRIOTIC OFFICERS, MEN AND WOMEN, AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY; FELLOW WORKERS IN GOVERNMENT; LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

LET ME, FIRST OF ALL, EXPRESS MY THANKS TO ADMIRAL ALEX PAMA FOR HIS GENEROUS INVITATION. SURELY, HIS INDULGENCE HAS MADE POSSIBLE MY BEING WITH OUR SNAPPY SAILORS AND MARINES ON THIS MOMENTOUS AND PROUD OCCASION OF THE 113TH FOUNDATION ANNIVERSARY OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY.

I AM GLAD TO CONVEY OUR WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR AWARDEES! YOUR COMMENDABLE ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE USHERED, WITHOUT DOUBT, TO THE CONTINUED ATTAINMENT OF THE MISSION OF OUR PHILIPPINE NAVY.

INDEED, OUR AWARDEES TODAY ARE DESERVING OF THE MODEST RECOGNITION, THAT WE HAVE ACCORDED TO THEM WITHIN THE HUMBLE MEANS OF OUR ARMED FORCES AND THE THANKFUL FILIPINO NATION.

WE OWE A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE TO OUR AWARDEES!

LET ME ALSO EXPRESS OUR WARMEST GREETINGS AND FELICITATIONS TO ALL THE OFFICERS, MEN AND WOMEN, AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY AS THEY GLADLY CELEBRATE THIS HAPPY EVENT TODAY. OF COURSE, WE ARE CERTAINLY AWARE THAT MANY OF OUR SAILORS AND MARINES ARE EITHER OUT AT SEA, OR IN DISTANT POSTS AND SHORES IN THE FULFILMENT OF THEIR OATH TO DISCHARGE THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL DUTY.

THEY ARE THERE, ABOARD OUR NAVAL PLATFORMS, IN THE JUNGLES AND HINTERLANDS OF OUR NATIONAL TERRITORY, IN OUR NAVAL BASES AND STATIONS AND REMOTE ISLANDS AND ISLETS OF OUR COUNTRY, AND IN FOREIGN SOILS. OUR SAILORS AND MARINES ARE ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE AND TRUE TO THEIR SWORN COMMITMENT, THEY ARE QUIETLY BUT DILIGENTLY PERFORMING THEIR JOBS IN UTTER OBLIVION AND ANONYMITY.

WE, THEREFORE, OWE ANOTHER BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE TO OUR SAILORS AND MARINES, AND THE ENTIRE PERSONNEL COMPLEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY!

TRULY INSPIRED BY THIS GLORIOUS OCCASION, THE PHILIPPINE NAVY CAN SIMPLY REFLECT BACK INTO ITS HUMBLE BEGINNINGS. AND TODAY IT PRIDES

ITSELF OF ELEVEN DECADES AND THREE YEARS OF DEVOTED PATRIOTIC SERVICE TO OUR ARMED FORCES AND DEAR MOTHERLAND.

VERY LIMITED IN ITS MATERIAL RESOURCES, IT GENERATES ITS POTENT STRENGTH FROM THE PROFOUND PATRIOTIC FERVOR OF ITS HUMAN RESOURCE. IT HAS STRONGLY RELIED ON THE INDOMITABLE COURAGE AND SACRIFICES OF ITS OFFICERS, MEN AND WOMEN. AND FROM THERE, IT HAS STOOD AND SURVIVED THE COUNTLESS ADVERSITIES OF OUR INTERNAL CONFLICTS, AND THE MANY SERIOUS CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES.

TRUE TO THEIR LOFTY NAVAL TRADITION, OUR GALLANT SEA DOGS AND THE FEW, THE PROUD, OUR MARINES, HAVE REPEATEDLY CONQUERED THE TROPHIES OF COMBAT IN THEIR ENCOUNTERS WITH THE ENEMY. BY THEIR TENACITY AND WILL, THEY HAVE READILY ENDURED, TIME AND AGAIN, THE MANY CRUEL CONSEQUENCES OF THE WARS THEY WERE IN. AND ALWAYS REMEMBERING THE FINEST IDEALS OF SOLDIERY, THEY GLADLY OFFERED THEIR LIVES WHEN IT BECAME NECESSARY.

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEEN YEARS OF VARIED PATROL DUTIES ALONG 36,000 NAUTICAL MILES OF OUR COUNTRY'S SHORELINES HAVE INDEED TAKEN ITS HEAVY TOLL ON THE PHILIPPINE NAVY. ITS ONCE DURABLE BUT FEW AND VERY OLD FLOATING ASSETS HAD SIMPLY SUCCEDED TO THE PUNISHMENT OF WEAR AND TEAR AND OBSOLESCENCE. PROCUREMENT AND REPLACEMENTS OF OUR NAVAL ASSETS CAME FEW AND FAR BETWEEN. AND, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, THERE WAS SIMPLY NO AVAILABLE FUNDS FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF OUR NAVY AND OUR MILITARY.

OUR SLOW-SAILING BUT DURABLE LSTs HAVE BEEN OUT OF SERVICE FOR QUITE LONG. MANY OF OUR PATROL SHIPS, VESSELS, AND CRAFT HAVE BEEN OUT OF COMMISSION. AND THE REMAINING ONES ARE DWINDLING, AND THEIR OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY HAS BEEN FAR DOWN BELOW NAVAL STANDARDS, AS THEY AWAIT TO LIE ON THEIR KEELS IN THE GRAVEYARDS. LEST WE FORGET, OUR NAVAL AIR GROUP HAS BEEN PRACTICALLY DEVOID OF FLYING ASSETS, THAT LEAVES OUR PILOTS WITH THEIR FLYING WINGS ON THE GROUND. THIS IS TRULY DEPLORABLE BUT PLAIN REALITY.

DURING THE 73RD FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY OF THE PHILIPPINE FLEET ON THE 15TH OF APRIL LAST MONTH, I SPOKE OF THE GENUINE STATE OF OUR NAVY AND OUR URGENT NEED TO ACQUIRE MORE POTENT AND CREDIBLE SEA PLATFORMS. THAT WAS, OF COURSE, PRIMARILY PREMISED ON THE DEPLETED STATUS OF NAVAL SHIPS, VESSELS, AND CRAFT IN OUR INVENTORY, AND OUR CURRENT SEA PLATFORM REQUIREMENTS FOR NAVAL OPERATIONS.

AND BY SOME STROKE OF LUCK, THROUGH THE FIRM RESOLVE AND DETERMINATION OF OUR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, THE PHILIPPINE NAVY SHALL NOT BE EMPTY-HANDED ON ITS BIRTHDAY TODAY.

PERHAPS A LITTLE BELATED AS IT MAY BE, YOU SHALL HAPPILY AWAIT TO WELCOME THE ARRIVAL OF OUR NEW MAN-OF-WAR, BRP GREGORIO DEL PILAR, THAT WOULD BE COMING FROM THE UNITED STATES INTO THE COUNTRY IN AUGUST OF THIS YEAR.

THIS HAMILTON – CLASS WEATHER HIGH ENDURANCE CUTTER, ORWHEC, WOULD CERTAINLY BE A BIG BOOST TO OUR FLEET CONSIDERING ITS MULTI-ROLE CAPABILITY. WE HOPE TO ACQUIRE MORE OF THIS TYPE OF VESSELS IN THE NEAR FUTURE AS WE GAIN HEADWAY IN OUR EXPLORATORY TALKS AND NEGOTIATION PROCESS. AND OF COURSE, IN DUE TIME, WE SHALL LIKEWISE HAVE NEW AIR ASSETS FOR OUR NAVY.

OUR WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS, THEREFORE, AND LET US GIVE A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE TO ADMIRAL PAMA AND THE PHILIPPINE NAVY.

TODAY, THE PRINCIPAL TASK OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY IS THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF ITS CAPABILITY IN THE CONDUCT OF SURFACE WARFARE OPERATIONS – ITS FUNDAMENTAL REASON FOR BEING. THIS BECOMES AN URGENT NECESSITY AS WE ANTICIPATE THE SPEEDY EXECUTION AND SUCCESS OF OUR INTERNAL PEACE AND SECURITY PLAN, ORIPSP.

AND ASSUMING THE ATTAINMENT OF THIS DEVELOPMENT, OUR ARMEDFORCES SHOULD BE WELL PREPARED TO SHIFT FROM THE CONDUCT OF INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS AND ASSUME ITS PRIMARY DUTY IN EXTERNAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY. THIS WOULD USHER OUR ARMED FORCES TO FULFILL ITS CONSTITUTIONAL GOAL, THAT IS “TO SECURE THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE STATE AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE NATIONAL TERRITORY”

THIS SCENARIO SHALL EVENTUALLY PLACE OUR PHILIPPINE NAVY AT THE FOREFRONT OF OUR EXTERNAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY ENDEAVORS. THUS, AS OUR ARMED FORCES ATTEMPT TO MODERNIZE, OUR NAVAL LEADERSHIP MAY FIND TIME TO EVALUATE, RE-ASSESS, AND STRENGTHEN THE TRAINING NEEDS AND SKILLS OF ITS PERSONNEL, ATTUNED TO THE PROFESSIONAL DEMANDS OF SURFACE WARFARE OPERATIONS AND ALLIED NAVAL OPERATIONAL SPECIALTIES AND SUB-SPECIALTIES.

IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE A LONG AND DIFFICULT WAY FOR OUR NAVY AND OUR ARMED FORCES TO MODERNIZE. BUT WE MUST DO IT IF WE WISH TO ATTAIN A SENSE OF BALANCE WITH OUR MILITARY NEIGHBORS AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. FOR MODERNITY, TO MY MIND, IS BEING ABLE TO THINK AND ACT IN THE SAME WAY AS WHAT THE WORLD IS THINKING AND DOING TODAY.

ALLOW ME NOW TO PROCEED TO A MORE DELICATE ISSUE IF I MAY. AS YOU VERY WELL KNOW, OUR ARMED FORCES HAS BEEN IN THE MIDST OF A SERIOUS SCANDAL AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE ALLEGED ANOMALOUS ACTS OF ITS FORMER LEADERSHIPS AND KEY OFFICERS.

THIS HAS DRAGGED AND HOUNDED THE ENTIRE MILITARY ORGANIZATION AND HAS CAST ASPERSIONS ON ITS INNOCENT PERSONNEL.

ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO, ON 12 MAY, I ATTENDED THE SENATE BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE HEARING ON THIS MATTER. WITH ME WAS GENERAL ED OBAN, JR., OUR “REFORMIST CHIEF OF STAFF” AS WHAT THE HONORABLE SENATOR FRANKLIN DRILON WOULD CALL HIM LATER.

IN THAT HEARING, I DELIVERED AN OPENING STATEMENT INFORMING THAT COMMITTEE ABOUT THE MEASURES AND REFORMS MADE AND BEING UNDERTAKEN BY OUR DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT AND ARMED FORCES, TO EFFECT OVERALL TRANSFORMATION – OF SYSTEMS, MILITARY CULTURE, NORMS, BEHAVIOURS AND ATTITUDES, AND THUS PREVENT THE OCCURRENCE OF GRAFT AND CORRUPT PRACTICES IN OUR ARMED FORCES.

IN THAT HEARING, I WISH TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I UTTERED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: “AT THE LEVEL OF THE AFP, WE ARE ASSURED THAT OUR CHIEF OF STAFF WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS TO PREVENT CORRUPTION, AND VIGOROUSLY PURSUE REFORM INITIATIVES AND MECHANISMS THAT WOULD BRING THE AFP TO THE FOREFRONT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE.”

IN THE CONCLUDING PORTION OF MY REMARKS THEREIN, I WISH TO INFORM YOU FURTHER THAT I MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS, MY PLEDGE TO THE FILIPINO PEOPLE:

“NO CORRUPT PRACTICES SHALL HAPPEN UNDER MY WATCH. WE WILL NEVER ALLOW INDISCRIMINATE SPENDING AND THE AFP FUNDS WILL BE PROPERLY MANAGED.”

“AS A FORMER FIELD OFFICER AND ARMY COMMANDER, I AM FULLY AWARE OF THE STRUGGLES OF MY FELLOW SOLDIERS, AND SO, I AM RESOLUTE IN MY COMMITMENT TO LOOK AFTER THEIR WELFARE.”

MY FELLOW WORKERS IN GOVERNMENT IN THE PHILIPPINE NAVY, I WISH TO CLOSE MY SPEECH BY LEAVING THESE REMARKS FOR YOU TO PONDER. I AM CERTAIN THAT THESE WILL NOT DETRACT FROM BUT ADD MEANING TO YOUR HAPPY COMMEMORATION.

AFTER ALL, OUR FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IS NOT THE JOB OF SECRETARY GAZMIN AND GENERAL OBAN ALONE. IT IS OUR TOTAL NATIONAL WAR – OF OUR PHILIPPINE NAVY, OF OUR ARMED FORCES, AND OF THE ENTIRE FILIPINO NATION AND PEOPLE.

ONCE MORE I WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! I CAST MY BEST BET ON YOUR THEME, **“PHILIPPINE NAVY: A VITAL PARTNER FOR PEACE, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF OUR MARITIME NATION.”**

THANK YOU AND A VERY PLEASANT DAY TO ALL!

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