

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
SPEECH AT THE INSPECTION OF THE C-130T AIRCRAFT**

Clark Air Base, Pampanga

March 31, 2023

[00:00:00]

Please take your seats.

House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez; Her Excellency, the Ambassador of the United States to the Philippines, Her Excellency MaryKay Carlson; General Andy Centino, Chief of Staff Armed Forces of the Philippines; Lieutenant General Stephen Parreño, Commanding General Philippine Air Force; my fellow workers in government and particularly the men and women and officers of our Air Force; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

We are here today to see and watch our significant air assets and bear witness to the recommissioning of the C-130T Aircraft with Tail Numbers 5011 and 5040.

The return of this aircraft, with these tail numbers to our fleet after undergoing extensive repair and maintenance, will enable the Philippine Air Force to more effectively conduct various missions, especially those involving humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations.

I recognize the Philippine Air Force, as well as express my appreciation to our partners in the US government and Portugal, for making all this possible.

It is a testament not only to our enduring friendship, but also of your support to the Philippines' agenda of enhancing our country's air transport, defense, and disaster-response capabilities.

Today, we also inspect the C-130T aircraft with Tail Number 5011 and we have witnessed the capability demonstration of the Hermes 900 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle and the C208B Grand Caravan EX.

As we are all aware, our country faces various climate-related hazards and is prone to many natural disasters such as typhoons, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

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Should any unfortunate event happen, we must be able to assess and to be able to respond quickly. We cannot afford to waste any time in the mission to save

lives. Therefore, the existence of these air assets is crucial to ensure that information, aid and responders are made available to effectively help affected areas.

As we inspect these C-130T aircraft and the capability demonstration of the Hermes 900 UAV, let us include in our prayers the safety of all its flights and of those who will be operating these important air assets. May these aircrafts serve us well and be used for the common good and the benefit of all Filipino people.

With this, I would like to convey and remind everyone of the sheer importance and of airworthiness and structural integrity of our air assets to ensure their effectiveness and guarantee the safety of their users.

Maintenance and repair are key aspects of our operations as well as important decision points in the acquisition of additional assets. I therefore direct the Philippine Air Force and the AFP to continue developing your capabilities for conducting maintenance and repair to keep all our military assets ready to go.

Conduct routinary check-up and regular engineering services for added safety requirements and provide extensive training to those who will be flying and using it.

I am certain that our partners will be more than willing to aid us in developing your capabilities and making the necessary investments to ensure that we achieve our shared goals for the country and for this region.

Just like the C-130T is designed for a wide-range of missions—from day-to-day peaceful operations to hectic times of crisis—may you also endure all the challenges that come your way, face them with vigor and courage and duty. Remain steadfast as you continue to perform your duties, especially in the crucial role as our country's first line of defense against external security threats.

I am confident, as long as you let your passion to serve and love our people will be the hallmarks of your service, then you will be an important part as we accelerate with excellence as the country's guardians of our precious skies and our bearers of hope.

I join you with optimism as we look forward to seeing how our Philippine Air Force can help our nation soar to even greater heights and achieve higher goals, all for the service of our Republic.

Before I end, allow me to acknowledge the Philippine Air Force for presenting me with the honorary Philippine Air Force Gold Wing Award. It inspires me to be counted among the esteemed list of awardees who have received this honorable distinction.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay ang Hukbong Himpapawid ng Pilipinas at ang buong Sandatahang Lakas! Maraming salamat po. *[applause]*

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