

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s  
SPEECH AT THE 125TH PHILIPPINE NAVY ANNIVERSARY**  
Philippine Navy Headquarters, Roxas Boulevard, City of Manila  
May 26, 2023

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Thank you, Executive Secretary Luke Bersamin. Please take your seats.

The Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps who have joined us today; Special Assistant to the President, Secretary Anton Lagdameo; the National Security Adviser Eduardo Año; National Defense Senior Undersecretary Carlito Galvez; honorable members of the Senate; honorable members of the House of Representatives; the Chief-of-Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines General Andy Centino; Flag Officer-in-Command Philippine Navy, Vice Admiral Toribio Adaci Jr.; commanding generals, officers and enlisted personnel of the Philippine Navy; my colleagues in government; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good morning to you all.

In May 1898, a Filipino flag was hoisted on one of the vessels of the Philippine Revolutionary Navy marking the formal establishment of our navy. A month later, Philippine sovereignty was formally proclaimed.

A hundred and twenty-five years on, we are still relishing the independence that our forebears had won for us. Today, we honor once again their triumphs and their bravery.

As we celebrate the Philippine Navy's 125th anniversary, we pay tribute to the institution and the men and women behind it, both uniformed and civilian, for they have continued the noble cause of defending the public sovereignty and keeping the peace.

We acknowledge their manifold achievements and accomplishments over the years, especially the efforts to secure our archipelago, more significantly, in the Batanes and Kalayaan Islands, the Philippine Rise and the West Philippine Sea.

We recognize not only their progressive naval and amphibious warfare skills that have earned international acclaim, but also the humanitarian acts that are likewise inherent to the calling of the Navy.

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Moreover, we recognize today's awardees, whose individual exemplary performances are a source of inspiration and a spur to improvement for the institution and its ranks.

Considering the changing tides of our national security and the significant gains that we have made in terms of internal security, our armed forces is working to recalibrate its focus more towards external defense of our borders.

In this crucial transition, full support for the armed forces must be guaranteed, especially for the Philippine Navy's priority goals of enhancing its intelligence, defense and coordinative capabilities.

With the commissioning of the two vessels today, we look further forward to the completion of the AFP modernization program, more especially Horizon Three, which is significantly devoted to the naval aspect of our military operations.

This endeavor will pave the way for the holistic transformation of our AFP into a stronger, modern and formidable organization. By then, the AFP will be more effective in its military aims and more responsive to our national goals.

We are keenly aware that the national interests are to be pursued in the context of the global order.

The seas that stretch before us are not to be seen as boundaries that divide our nations, but they must be seen as channels for mutually beneficial exchanges and collaboration.

Our navy serves not only as valiant guardians of our seas and shores, but peaceful emissaries as well. Highly disciplined and experienced in international engagement, it adheres to the internationally recognized codes of conduct such as UNCLOS and the recently approved ASEAN Guidelines of Maritime Interaction.

In this light, it plays a significant role in our collective effort to nurture friendly international relations by fostering mutual trust and confidence, freedom of navigation and overflight and, of course, safety of our seas.

As it sails on towards the next century, the Philippine Navy remains ever relevant in our nation building, and continue to be indispensable to the attainment of the aspiration of a more comfortable and secure way of life for all Filipinos.

This is an opportune occasion to renew our commitment and dedication to the cause of strengthening our Republic of its peace and prosperity.

And so, to the brave men and women of our Navy: in fulfilling your duties and mandates, be agents and exemplars for our citizenry by working for unity and by championing respect for our constitutional order and the rule of law.

Rest assured that as your commander in chief, this administration will work tirelessly not only to improve the Armed Forces, but are also looking for ways and means to improve your individual welfare and those of your families and loved ones as well.

This is your Commander-in-Chief, wishing you fair winds and following seas.

Mabuhay ang Hukbong Dagat at ang buong Sandatahang Lakas ng Pilipinas!

Mabuhay ang Republika ng Pilipinas!

Maraming salamat at magandang umaga sa inyong lahat! [applause]

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