



DALLAS — Earlier this week, President Duterte delivered his second State of the Nation Address or SONA before members of the Legislative, Judiciary, Diplomatic Corps (ambassadors of foreign nations), and other government personnel and on television to the Filipino people.

The reported 14-page address took Mr. Duterte two hours to deliver.

It took that long because of his propensity to divert from his prepared speech in order to talk about matters, which, oftentimes are irrelevant to the occasion, like Filipino men maintaining two women (a wife and a mistress).

He also lashed out at the United States for criticizing the extrajudicial killings involved in his anti-drugs campaign as total disregard for human rights.

Days before the SONA, President Duterte castigated the U.S. and said he would never visit America because it is a “lousy country.”

We wonder if he really knows the meaning of the words he uses when lambasting certain people and places.

The SONA speech was about “genuine change” in Philippine society.

He zeroed in on his election promise of eliminating drugs, crimes and corruption in government.

During the campaign in 2016, he assured Filipinos that in three to six months, he would be able to achieve his promise.

However, after one year in office, drugs, crimes and corruption continue to menace Philippine

society.

He asked for extension and told his audience the fight will not stop even up to the end of his term because the alternatives are “dealers, jail or hell.”

We watched the SONA entirely on television from Dallas.

What caught me, which almost made me fell off from my chair, was when President Duterte said in part, “I value human life.”

Value human life?

Who was he kidding?

The rest of the world outside the Philippines are collectively condemning the total disregard for human rights and the rule of law under the Duterte Administration’s anti-drugs campaign.

The campaign has been referred to as “anti-poor” campaign because almost all the victims were poor.

According to reports, 8,000 to 12,000 suspected drug addicts and traffickers had been killed either by police or by motorcycle-riding gunmen without due process.

There were pictures published around the world and in social media as proofs of some of the killings.

Thus, whatever positive measures achieved or done by the Duterte Administration are overshadowed by criticisms about EJKs or extrajudicial killings.

EJK has already been made part of Mr. Duterte's campaign.

It is continuing. In fact, the other day, a poor 15-year-old epileptic boy, suspected as being drug-addict, was killed by police officers outside of Manila.

American lawmakers against Duterte visit to U.S.

The following was **FR**'s online editorial earlier this week.

“And I certainly believe very strongly that a man with the human rights record of Mr. Duterte should not be invited to the White House. If he comes, I will lead the protest. We ought to be on the side of advocating for human rights, not explaining them away,” Massachusetts Rep. James McGovern said.

Above was the opening statement of Rep. McGovern during the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing in the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this week, which dealt with President Duterte's poor human rights record.

Last May, 12 U.S. senators wrote the White House and asked President Trump to delay the Philippine president's visit, which the American chief executive extended to Duterte in an earlier phone conversation.

The senators' letter read in part: "Our relationship (with the Philippines) is based on historical connections, shared values, and mutual strategic interests. President Duterte's campaign of killing threatens the fundamental fabric of our relationship."

In a nutshell, the unpopularity of Mr. Duterte among Americans is reflected by the actions and words coming from members of the two houses of the U.S. Congress.

Defending his boss, Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alan Peter Cayetano, said in a reported statement that the Americans do not have the right to investigate President Duterte's anti-drugs and anti-crime campaigns.

The former senator added, "They are not our boss."

A lawyer of his stature, the ex-senator sounded like he was playing dumb.

He must be well aware that those who condemn rulers who don't have respect for life and law are not trying to boss it over the Philippines.

They simply believe in and adhere to the universal principles of rule of law and respect for life.

That's what modern democracy is about.

By any measure, especially to believers of law and life, these killings are far from being regarded as good and decent governance.

Can an impeached president pardon himself?

In light of Russian investigations going on in Washington, D.C., talks of a possible President Trump impeachment has begun.

President Trump himself emphasized that the president's power to pardon is absolute.

Mr. Trump must be telling those who are bent in finding the truth to stop with their investigations because he will use his power to pardon anyway.

“The (U.S.) Constitution bars the president from using his pardon power to prevent his impeachment, but doesn't specifically say whether he can pardon himself in criminal cases. The ban on impeachment pardons is in Article II, which says the president has the power 'to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment.'”

Tribe, Painter and Eisen point to another provision in Article I that says impeached individuals

“shall nevertheless be liable and subject to indictment, trial, judgment and punishment, according to law.”

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