

CPP-NDF on Philippine Presidency - Declaration of independence, Red leaders Tiamzons say of Duterte tough talk to US

Thursday 22 September 2016, by [ANGELI SABILLO Kristine](#) (Date first published: 22 September 2016).

President Rodrigo Duterte's strong words against US President Barack Obama should be taken as a declaration of independence from its former colonial master, according to National Democratic Front (NDF) consultants Benito and Wilma Tiamzon.

"Maybe more weight should be given to the declaration of independence rather than the manner of how the declaration was made," Benito Tiamzon said during an INQ&A interview on Tuesday.

He was referring to President Duterte's controversial comments against his US counterpart who had intended to raise the issue of human rights with the Philippine leader on the sidelines of a Southeast Asian summit in Laos.

Obama had abruptly cancelled the meeting after Mr. Duterte was reported to have cursed the US leader. The Filipino leader later apologized and blamed the media for allegedly misquoting him.

Mr. Duterte has also been quite vocal against the United States, and has recently called for American troops to pull out from the south, where they have been helping Filipino forces against the Abu Sayyaf.

The Tiamzons, who are staunch critics of US influence over the country, earlier told INQUIRER.net that Filipinos should be proud because they have a president who could stand up against the United States.

"We are happy because for the first time the president of the Philippines stood up and has been distancing himself from a previous patron despite the tendency of our presidents to bow down, especially to the president of the United States," Benito Tiamzon said.

His wife, Wilma, alleged that all previous presidents of the country won the position because they were supported and sponsored by the United States.

"But President Duterte is different from other presidents because he is brave and ready to stand up and speak out against President Obama," she said.

Benito Tiamzon said he was hopeful that the "declaration of independence" would open possibilities for the country, which used to look to Washington "before making important decisions on Philippine policies."

A treaty that provided the legal cover for the return of US troops in the country and a cooperation agreement that allowed them temporary basing rights here undermined the country's sovereignty, the Tiamzons said.

The United States, they said, were also interfering or influencing the legislative and judiciary branches of the Philippine government.

Asked about flip-flopping statements of the President, Benito Tiamzon said Mr. Duterte might have a “tendency to consider the reaction” to his controversial statements.

“But I think the overall trajectory is clear,” she said.

The pair is expected to return to Oslo, Norway, in the first week of October for the second round of peace talks aimed at ending one of Asia’s longest running insurgencies.

Kristine Angeli Sabillo

@KSabilloINQ

Their interview with INQ&A was their first live guesting after being released from detention and joining the NDF peace panel in the formal talks.

INQ&A is broadcast live every Tuesday, 8 p.m., over Radyo Inquirer 990AM, INQ 990 Television and Facebook.

P.S.

* “Declaration of independence, Red leaders Tiamzons say of Duterte tough talk to US”.

INQUIRER.net. 05:20 AM September 22nd, 2016:

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/817783/declaration-of-independence-red-leaders-tiamzons-say-of-duterte-tough-talk-to-us>