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Good morning.

I promised my mentor, Dr. Rico Jose, that I would give a much shorter reaction.

Actually, the first reaction I'd give is that whenever I am in Korea, the vendors in Insadong would be happy to meet Filipino customers rather than Chinese customers.

Anyway, much of the historical and political events surrounding Philippine-Korean relations have fortunately been covered by the previous reactor, Dr. Jose, so I will try not to focus too much on those particular aspects. However, the idea is that it is very, very significant to all of us that the contributions of the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea—and, in general, the contributions of Filipinos in the Korean War—is the most important fundamental point in the establishment of Philippines-Korea relations. And what we have today—fast forward to 65 years later—as aspects of Korean popular culture, particularly Korean dramas, and popular music, and so on and so forth, which, I don't know, but maybe some of you may trivialize, but as an academic, believe me, these are very important topics for scholarly research—they all belong to a *longue duree* of social-historical developments, which include, of course, the Philippines.

Now, my personal knowledge of the Korean War is really very scant, is really very, very little. You have to understand that in our Philippine history textbook, there is little to

nothing in reference to the Korean War. There's ample or substantial discussion when it comes to the Revolution, the Philippine-American War, and—what I share with Dr. Jose—World War II, the Japanese occupation period. (Segue a little bit, I will be asking for interviews in the future time, given your experience also in World War II.) And for that regard, I owe my academic knowledge of the Korean War and the PEFTOK to my professor, Mr. David O. Lozada III, whose thesis was on the PEFTOK itself, and not incidentally, Dr. Jose was one of the panelists.

Now, personally, I am actually very interested specifically on the events and developments that happened in the Korean War using a history-from-below perspective in which I am looking at the experiences of refugees, civilians, individuals, non-combatants who were involved and who suffered throughout the onslaught of the Korean War.

However, it is also very, very useful and significant to take a look at what our honorable guests have provided for today—the individual experiences of soldiers who were involved in the combat operations and rehabilitation during and after the Korean War. They also constitute the important lynchpin of social history—the personal human experience that will move towards social experiences and developments that happened during that time. Now, in particular, I am really interested in research on food and medicine during times of conflict—and in this particular case, the Korean War.

Now, I will briefly highlight some of the important points of the four speakers, and to all of them, I would quote one line in the prayer of St. Ignatius, which is: “to fight and not to heed the wounds.” Col. Vilorio of the 20th BCT provided a very

significant point—and I think it should be an eye opener for all of us—which is that men at that time were different. They kept their promises, and the idea is that you have there the value of honor and democracy.

Now, we have to understand this as something we should idealize, ladies and gentlemen, and this is something that I will share with my students in my afternoon class later. But the idea here is that it is very, very important for us—what Professor Jose has mentioned earlier—the juxtaposition of Philippine history as well as Korean history, the very involvement of our soldiers in the Korean War should be taken into context of a long-term period of struggle in which Filipinos had been experienced or have been experiencing a war between 1942 and 1945—and of course, I'm referring to World War II. We have many veterans—one or two of our speakers, in fact were veterans of World War II. The idea there that World War II, in my academic opinion, is very important for us in understanding really this significant movement towards realizing patriotism and nationalism for the Philippines.

Of course, one may say that it should start with the Revolution, or the Philippine-American War, among many other highlights in Philippine political and social history. However, the importance of World War II is something that the Philippines was held practically helpless at the onslaught of the Japanese occupation period. Then after that particular horrifying war was that the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea was sent at a time when the Philippines was in a really sad state. The Philippines was devastated by war, economically down the drain. At the same time—and this is

for me, I think, I would need some clarifications later on—how this, it's more, in my opinion, in my academic opinion, it was a gamble on the part of the Roxas administration to allow able soldiers—perhaps the cream of the crop of the Armed Forces of the Philippines—to a foreign conflict at a time when the Philippines itself was threatened by a domestic conflict, that is the Huk Rebellion. So that was a big gamble that really paid off.

So, the idea is that, it was mentioned also by Col. Viloria that they were experienced in guerrilla warfare, so they knew how to fight against guerrilla warfare. This is very, very significant in connecting the experiences of our veterans and their experiences there in the Korean War. The Battle of Yuldong in which 50+ men also died and numerous others perished or were wounded in the conflict, plus the numerous battles in which they fought was very, very significant also precisely because you have there the test of wills. And it's something that you have to take into consideration precisely because in the first place, they're not fighting on domestic soil. They were fighting in a very different terrain, in a foreign country, and, as Maj. Young mentioned, it was the coldest in 200 years. So, it's also part of my academic curiosity as to how our veterans were able to survive in a very different condition—hottest summer, coldest winter. And in the Philippines, we don't have that experience.

Now, we were laughing, and we were trivializing when Maj. Young showed his Twitter account. Yes, we were laughing, but for me, that was very, very significant. What is the significance of this? How to connect history with the present. And it's not something that your professors will just tell you in

your history classes. I'm talking about particular realities today that, in both cases of the Filipino youth and even among the Korean youth, there is a detachment from the significance of historical past. For example—and this is from my own personal surveys and interviews in Korea—many young Koreans are not able to grasp anymore the significance of the Korean War. For them, it's a remote past that they will never perhaps experience in their entire lives. Korean youth, they are required to render an average of two years military service, but it's military service. It is not necessarily going into active combat operations, as their predecessors did 65 years earlier.

At the same time, Filipinos also—*maliban na lang* if you are a real soldier, and you were sent to Mindanao, that's a different story—but apart from that, we do not have in the contemporary age, a wide-scale warfare, a wide-scale military conflict as that experience—World War II, the Korean War, or something like that.

As an academician, as a scholar, as a historian, it is important for me to highlight the significance of how to connect the past with the present—that the past is not dead. It is very much alive, and we don't have to really twist our brains in order to make use of it and appreciate it. It is part of our present. And it will be part of our future.

Patriotism was so powerful for the Filipinos, quoting from Maj. Maximo Young. It was sacrifice for *Inang Bayan*, and this is something we have to understand, where there are ideals that must be taken into consideration during that particular time. And it's really something that should also be continually present, in our ideals of the present age.

At the same time, Maj. Maximo Young also highlighted the significance of the fact that Korea was also ravaged by poverty. And as mentioned by Professor Jose earlier, there are a lot of connections or parallelisms between Korea's colonial experience with the Japanese and the Filipinos' experience with the Americans. But I think the better comparison would be between the brutalities of the Japanese during World War II as well as the brutalities of the Japanese in Korea at a much earlier period. That's 1919. So, there are very active and very, very strong points.

Maj. Young also mentioned that athlete's foot and gangrene were plaguing their ranks during that time. So, as an academician, or as a research scholar, this will be my research in the future time. How did they deal with diseases? Where did you get your food from? How did you deal with athlete's foot and gangrene? How did it factor into your day-to-day operations, or even your day-to-day lives there in a really very unfriendly environment?

Now, Col. Flores should be lauded because I believe you were not reading. You were recalling from memory because you could no longer read what you wrote. In the terms of historical methodology, it is very, very significant—the ability of one's interviewer to be able to recall in detail what has happened during the time. Because in actual recollection, of course there are limitations towards oral narratives, towards oral discussion of events that have happened.

However, you will see there the human element also—the fact that there are things that cannot be forgotten, things that are continually highlighted. And you did mention that there was the DZRH program of Ms. Dely Magpayo which ran for a

very, very long time, PI calling Korea program—this, I believe, could be a thesis altogether. I believe this could be a topic for a thesis. It's very, very important because it's the first time I've ever heard of it. And this is not necessarily related to combat operations, but it is very important in boosting and sustaining the morale of our countrymen who fought during the time.

And finally, we had—of course, he did mention also about San Miguel Beer, but it was highlighted more by Gen. Villamor. The shiploads of San Miguel Beer is, I think, something that should also be studied. This is coming from a scholar who is interested in studying food history, but at the same time, we also have to understand its significance to the soldiers who fought during the time.

But at the same time also, Gen. Villamor mentioned their unit's dealings with the Kim boys. It's a very popular surname, what can we do? But you will see there that even at a young age, Koreans appreciate and understand that what they were doing was something very important for them—not necessarily for their country but for them, as persons, as people. And they were offering what we may say as menial jobs, but how far can they go anyway at such a young age?

At the same time, Gen. Villamor was mentioning that they were into training for different types of experiences—biological, nuclear, chemical warfare, and the development of the vertical envelopment of the enemy. I believe that from what you shared to us earlier, you were sharing research and development. You may not have been in the active combat situation, as in what was experienced by the 10th, by the 14th, by the 19th Battalion Combat Teams, but I believe that the 2nd

Battalion Combat Team was doing something equally significant to what the others were doing, because it saved lives, and it won many battles. It turned the tide for them.

Now, one last comment I'd like to make is something that, I believe, should be said out in the open, and I learned this from my professor, Dr. Rico Jose. The idea that there is this wrong—actually very fallacious—notion that has been going around, even among my interviewers who are veterans and those who experienced World War II, that the Koreans were the most vicious among the imperial Japanese army soldiers. In the research of Dr. Jose, it is important to note there were no Koreans sent to the Philippines during World War II. It's something we have to clear out in our historical narratives.

Thank you very much.