

SPECIAL MESSAGE (VIDEO)

by **H.E. Fidel V. Ramos**

Former President, Republic of the Philippines

20th Battalion Combat Team (BCT)

Thank you for this grand opportunity of addressing you, young people of the Philippines, in the Ateneo de Manila University. Korea occupies a very important part of our world history, including the fate of many countries around Korea like the Philippines.

There must be a final peace treaty in Korea, which has not yet been done. There is no final closure. This is the longest war existing because of the lack of a treaty among the protagonists. Let's work at it. Let's study Korean history – both North and South.

The Philippines was one of the 16 countries that provided combat troops to defend freedom and democracy in Korea. Five other countries contributed hospital and logistics units. That's how big it was. And as a Korean war veteran belonging to the 20th Battalion Combat Team of the PEFTOK (Philippine Expeditionary Forces to Korea), which was the second contingent that went there after the 10th, I am really proud to have participated in that war for a great cause as a young Infantry Lieutenant. There were some 7,500 of us in five Battalion Combat Teams (BCT) that took part. And we were all volunteers. We are all very proud of that history. But we are even prouder of having represented our country, the Republic of the Philippines, which was, at that time, also

involved in so many problems – including a communist insurgency.

But, by act of Congress and President Elpidio Quirino, we willingly contributed Filipino soldiers to help fight aggression and oppression. That's how we are, Filipinos. We also participated in the Vietnam War and we were part of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force, the second largest in the UN. I hope that you, young people, appreciate what your forebears, your elders – probably your grandfathers – fought for on the Korean peninsula from 1950 to 1953, when the armistice took place.

But that is not yet done. Let us help them fight for peace. North and South Korea hopefully will agree to make peace because they hold the key to the peace of the world in the 21st century – in our time.