

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Ferdinand R. "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr., of the Philippines

May 1, 2023

President Biden. Well, Mr. President, welcome back to the White House. We were talking on the way over. It's been a while since you've been here.

President Marcos. Yes, sir.

President Biden. You were with—here with President Reagan, with your father. And we welcome you back.

And you know, when we met in New York last year, you told me that a strong alliance has to continue, quote—I'm using your phrase—"to evolve as we face the challenges of this new century." And we are facing new challenges. And I can't think of any better partner to have than you.

I couldn't agree more that we have to. This relationship has to continue to evolve. And together, we're tackling climate change, we're accelerating our countries' transition to clean energy, and we're standing up for our shared democratic values and workers' rights and the rule of law.

And together, we're deepening our economic cooperation, which is going to continue to deepen and I think is mutually beneficial. And we're going to announce that I'm—we're going to announce today that I'm sending a first-of-its-kind Presidential trade and investment mission to the Philippines. We talked about that very briefly—

President Marcos. Yes, sir.

President Biden. —up in New York.

And the United States also reminds ironclad in our—remains ironclad in our commitment to the defense of the Philippines, including the South China Sea, and we're going to continue to support the Philippines' military modernization goals.

Mr. President, our countries not only share a strong partnership, we share a deep friendship, one that has been enriched by millions of Filipino Americans in the communities all across the United States of America.

And so I want to thank you again for being here, and I look forward to our conversation today. And I invite you to make any comments you'd like. The floor is yours.

President Marcos. Thank you very much, Mr. President. And I—as you say, in the difficult times that we are facing ahead of us, I—we need to find many ways to strengthen our alliances and our partnerships in the face of the new economy that we are facing postpandemic.

Beyond that, there is—there are also the issues—geopolitical issues that have made the region where the Philippines is possibly, arguably the most complicated geopolitical situation in the world right now.

And so it is only natural that—for the Philippines to look to its sole treaty partner in the world to strengthen and to redefine the relationship that we have and the roles that we play in the face of those rising tensions that we see now around the South China Sea and Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific regions.

So I welcome very much the opportunity to come here, to visit with you at the White House, and to discuss all these terribly important issues.

We have many things that are new that need to be assessed and, again, our role as partners in the world—in our worldview of what we are hoping for the future of peace, not only in the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific region, but in the whole world.

So thank you once again for this opportunity, Mr. President.

President Biden. Thank you. And I'm optimistic things will get even better.

President Marcos. Thank you, sir.

President Biden. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:54 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

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