

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK

ARRIVAL STATEMENT OF PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. FOR HIS STATE VISIT TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

[Delivered at the Maharlika in Villamor Airbase, Pasay City | 05 January 2023]

Thank you very much, Secretary Boying Remulla. Vice President Sara Duterte; *[Oh, please sit down]* former president and Senior Deputy Speaker, again our --- in this case, our consultant who actually was leading the way in many of our meetings, former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo; House Speaker Martin Romualdez; His Excellency Huang Xilian, the Ambassador of China to the Philippines; members of the Cabinet that are here with us, including the Cabinet members who joined us in the delegation; and Senator Imee Marcos, the head of the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate; and of course First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos; I believe Congressman Marcos of Ilocos Norte is also around; Congressman Antonino Calixto, I saw when we came in; the Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Bartolome Vicente Bacarro; the PNP Chief General Azurin; and the commanders of the major services; my fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, good evening.

I am pleased to report to you and to the Filipino people the key outcomes of the State Visit to the People's Republic of China from 3rd to 5th of January of this new year, 2023.

I had cordial and fruitful engagements with the President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang, and National People's Congress Chairman Li Zhanshu.

And I have noticed over the years, that it is very, very evident to me and I have seen the considerable progress in terms of economic development from the China that I experienced in my earliest visits, and the economic powerhouse that it is today.

I recognize how China's development has positively impacted our relationship with our Chinese friends, especially considering that the Philippines' ties with China as a close neighbor and important bilateral partner.

During our meeting, President Xi and I had a comprehensive discussion on the overall state of bilateral relations between the Philippines and China. Our conversation covered important facets of our relations, particularly agriculture, energy, infrastructure, trade and investment, science and technology, and, of course, people-to-people ties.

We renewed our commitment to strengthen bilateral cooperation as close neighbors in the Asia Pacific Region. The visit offered us an opportunity to exchange views on important issues that affect regional and global peace, stability, and development.

As we embark on a new chapter of our bilateral ties, President Xi and I shared the commitment to do everything possible to ensure that the Philippines and China will continue the positive trajectory of our relations which has been elevated to that of Comprehensive Strategic Cooperation since 2018.

The Chinese President and I were able to witness the signing of 14 government agreements that will broaden and deepen our ties in many vital important areas.

These agreements cover various sectors, from agriculture, education, energy, environment, infrastructure, science and technology, trade, and people-to-people exchanges. We likewise ventured into new areas of cooperation, such as e-commerce, digital cooperation. These agreements reflect our common priorities as well as practical ways of pursuing bilateral cooperation in an ever-increasing range of areas.

We welcomed the growing trade relations between our two countries. We both noted the large trade deficit with China but President Xi also said that China is willing to import more quality agricultural produce from the Philippines, and specifically was mentioned very often was the importation of durian.

And we signed the agreement on the 4th of January and the agreement between the Philippines and China as to the rules and regulations to make possible the importation of durian, mangosteen, and other specialty rice

varieties and other fruits to China to help redress the trade imbalance that we now have.

President Xi and I also had an in-depth and frank discussion on the West Philippine Sea issue. We took note of our growing maturity of this bilateral relationship – this bilateral relationship which now allows both sides to manage differences on the West Philippine Sea, so as to not allow it to hinder the rest of our fruitful engagements and multi-faceted cooperation.

I emphasized to President Xi how my administration intends to pursue an independent foreign policy: that we are more than willing to cooperate whenever possible, in the pursuit of regional peace and our two countries' national interest.

We agreed that maritime issues between the two countries do not comprise the entirety of our relations, but we acknowledged as well that they remain a significant concern and priority for the Philippines and for the region.

To avoid possible misunderstanding and miscalculation, we agreed to establish direct communication lines at various levels up to the highest level. I therefore welcome the signing of an agreement between our foreign ministries in this regard, and directed our agencies to revitalize existing bilateral mechanisms to promote further mutual trust and confidence in each other.

On energy cooperation, we agreed to resume discussions on oil and gas development and explore opportunities for renewable energy, such as solar, wind, photovoltaic energy, and even we touched upon nuclear energy.

I also met with Premier Li Keqiang and conveyed to him our country's openness to enhance the economic and socio-cultural aspects of our relationship.

I discussed with Chairman Li Zhanshu of the National People's Congress how we could enhance cooperation between our two legislatures, building on the strength of party-to-party relations.

And earlier today, I, together with the Filipino business delegation, met with Chinese business leaders and investors from top corporations and conducted roundtable meetings focusing on renewable energy, agri-business, nickel processing, battery and electric vehicle manufacturing.

I am pleased to inform you that there has been an overwhelming response

from the Chinese business community on the investment and trade opportunities in our economy.

The various Chinese companies participating in these meetings presented their investment plans in the Philippines, totaling USD 22.8 billion and trade purchase intentions of close to USD 2.1 billion.

When realized, these investments will support our country's economic recovery efforts and create more jobs for Filipinos within our country.

We will be releasing a more detailed breakdown of those numbers, which will be included in the final report of the delegation.

Before I conclude, I reiterate my deep appreciation to President Xi for his gracious invitation and to the Chinese government for the opportunity to reaffirm and deepen the friendship between our two countries and to explore avenues of cooperation that are mutually beneficial.

And finally, I thank our *kababayans* in China for their continuing support and trust which will continue to inspire and motivate me to do my best as I steer our country towards an inclusive and sustainable development.

It was unfortunate however that it was not possible to hold a meeting with our countrymen in China, seeing as the COVID protocols are still in place. But nonetheless, we are still reaching out to them and thanking them once again for their support.

I hope --- I think that this is a very good beginning. I do not believe this will be the last visit that we will be making to China and we are anticipating as I continually reiterated an invitation to President Xi and Madame Peng to come to the Philippines and visit with us on perhaps a state visit, on official visit in the future.

And with that, the strengthening relationship with China and the Philippines can only help smooth the way to a greater and deeper and stronger partnership between our two countries, which will also give us a stronger foundation to resolve whatever issues may continue between our two countries.

I consider that despite the fact that we were there for essentially two days and working for about a day and a half. There is much that we have been able to achieve, but as I said, it is a good start and we will continue to work on this most important relationship with this most important partner of the Republic of the Philippines.

Maraming maraming salamat po at magandang araw po sa inyong lahat! *[applause]*

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