

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**REMARKS BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.
FOR THE JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE**
[Delivered at the Prime Minister's Office, Canberra, Australia |
29 February 2024]

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Today, Prime Minister Albanese and I had a very engaging discussion on a wide range of opportunities and issues under the ambit of our Strategic Partnership.

I certainly am very honored on a personal and official level for the invitation as Guest of the Australian Government and, therefore, the opportunity to personally convey our commitment to this partnership and to reiterate Filipino friendship.

Our conversation centered on ways to maximize the enhanced status of relations between our two countries, including on defense, maritime cooperation, non-traditional security concerns, trade and investment, development cooperation, multilateral collaboration, and people-to-people linkages.

Defense and security remains a key area of cooperation between the Philippines and of Australia. We look forward to amplifying our joint activities and the capacity-building efforts in this regard.

On economic cooperation, we anticipate greater bilateral economic cooperation that will allow us to withstand shocks, to be resilient against economic coercion, and to provide an enabling environment for our respective businesses and labor markets to further flourish under the ambit of our Strategic Relationship and Partnership.

At the same time, we look forward to our robust people-to-people ties to drive greater cooperation between our two countries and our peoples.

The significant Filipino diaspora, the fifth largest immigrant community here in Australia, has contributed significantly to the economic and cultural wellbeing not only of our country, but yours as well.

It is also an undeniable indicator of Australia's openness to embrace a globalized and interconnected world.

Both the Philippines and Australia welcome future consultations and dialogues as we explore and map the uncharted waters that can bring in new opportunities for a closer and stronger relationship between our two countries.

To this end, I had earlier the distinction of delivering my Address to the Australian Parliament, an honor befitting a partnership between two equal sovereign states and a vital opportunity for the Philippines to express our vision for this cordial and warm friendship.

I had the opportunity to expound on a critical role of peace and security in our continued march towards prosperity.

As mentioned in my speech and as discussed with the Prime Minister, both the Philippines and Australia emphasized the importance of observing and promoting the rules-based order governed by international law and informed by the principles of equity and of justice.

Stability in the Indo-Pacific region is a utmost priority for both our countries.

The Philippines recognizes Australia's indisputable role as a regional stabilizer. As a flourishing democracy and a staunch advocate of the rules-based order and rule of law, Australia responsibly discharges its economic and strategic capacity, thereby sustaining the regional framework that has allowed us to experience unprecedented growth and peace.

The Philippines fully adheres to the same set of values, making our two countries natural partners in the region.

As we are situated in such a dynamic regional security environment, I would like to assure our Australian friends that the Philippines will continue to partner with Australia in promoting predictability of actions in the international arena.

The Philippines is fully ready to continue upholding its commitments as your Strategic Partner and as one of your oldest friends in the region.

In the same vein, we recognize Australia's steadfast commitment to positive engagement with the ASEAN region and we wish Australia success in its upcoming hosting of the Special Summit to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations.

I look forward to the active participation of the Philippines in the four important thematic tracks of the Special Summit.

The three agreements exchanged today shall enhance information sharing, capability building, and interoperability between our relevant government agencies in the maritime domain and maritime environment, cyber and critical technology, and competition law.

The three agreements add to the more than 120 agreements that our two countries have signed through the decades. And these are in various fields, including defense cooperation, air services, education, research, scientific and cultural cooperation, amongst others.

The Prime Minister and I both agreed to continue to look for ways to explore every option possible, to bring our countries closer than ever and collectively, with optimism and hopeful outlook, to be a force of good, unity, stability, and prosperity in our region.

Thank you.

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