

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**OPENING REMARKS BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR., JAPANESE FOREIGN
MINISTER HON. KAMIKAWA YOKO, AND JAPANESE DEFENSE MINISTER HON. KIHARA
MINORU AT THE JOINT COURTESY CALL**

[Delivered at the Heroes Hall, Malacañang, Manila | 8 July 2024]

PRESIDENT MARCOS: A great pleasure and honor to welcome the Foreign Minister, the Honorable Kamikawa Yoko and the Defense Minister of Japan, the Honorable Kihara Minoru, to the Philippines today for a very, very important event that our two countries have been working very hard to achieve.

I'm glad that having witnessed the commencement, the [beginning] of this agreement that it has now come to fruition and that we are ready now to sign the Reciprocal Agreement.

And your presence here increases our confidence and the importance that the Japanese government puts on these extremely important agreements that we have. And I'm very glad that we have come to this day.

So, once again, welcome to the Philippines. I'm happy that you were able to come and visit to witness or to be part of this very important event.

Good morning and welcome.

JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER HON. KAMIKAWA YOKO: Thank you very much for heartwarming welcome from your Excellency. And also thank you very much for pointing out the importance of the Japan and Philippines alliance.

I'm very much honored to have the opportunity to make a courtesy call to your Excellency, President Marcos.

I would like to convey Prime Minister Kishida's best wishes to you as well at this occasion.

Japan and the Philippines have made concrete progress in a wide range of areas of cooperation.

In particular, the fact that we are able to sign the RAA today is a great achievement following the leaders decided to launch negotiations at last November's summit meeting.

To maintain and strengthen the free and open international order based on the rule of law, we would like to strengthen our partnership under your excellency's leadership. Thank you.

JAPANESE DEFENSE MINISTER HON. KIHARA MINORU: Mr. President, this is indeed a tremendous honor for me to be granted an opportunity for an office call.

Thanks to the exceptional leadership by Mr. President and Prime Minister Kishida, our two nations [have] made great strides in defense cooperation and exchanges.

The signature of the reciprocal access agreement today represents the cooperative relationship that our two nations enjoy, and I welcome this new development which reinforces the effectiveness of our defense cooperation.

I am committed to working with my good colleague Secretary Teodoro to further enhance our defense cooperation and exchanges in order to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific.

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