

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE  
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**REMARKS BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.  
DURING THE COURTESY CALL OF U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE ANTONY BLINKEN  
AND U.S. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LLOYD AUSTIN III**

[Held at the Kalayaan Hall of Malacañan Palace | 30 July 2024]

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and of course to our visitors from the United States, Secretary Tony Blinken and Secretary Lloyd Austin, for the two-plus-two meetings that we are going to be conducting.

Welcome back to the Philippines and I'm always very happy that these communication lines are very open so that all the things that we are doing together, in terms of our alliance, in terms of the specific context of our situation here in the West Philippine Sea and in the Indo-Pacific are continuously examined and re-examined so we are agile in terms of our responses.

But we are very happy to see you once again. I'm a bit surprised considering how interesting your political situation has become back in the States but I'm glad that you found the time to come and visit with us.

**US SECRETARY OF STATE ANTONY BLINKEN:** Mr. President, thank you so much. Thank you for the --- as always the warm welcome. I bring you greetings from President Biden, Vice President Harris along with Secretary Austin.

We're very, very pleased to be here. Let me just start by sending our deepest condolences to all the victims of the recent typhoon and to say again, anything we can do to be of assistance, we welcome doing that.

I think today is genuinely historic. This is the first time that the Philippines has hosted our two-plus-two. It's I think really evidence of a steady drumbeat, a very high-level engagements between our countries that are covering the full range of issues and opportunities that bring us together, not only security but also economic, and we're truly grateful for this partnership.

We look forward to a very good day with our colleagues and to further advancing the critical work that we're doing together.

So, thank you again for receiving us.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Of course.

**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE LLOYD AUSTIN III:** Mr. President, may I quote Tony's comments on the warm welcome. It really is great to be back in country again and also his offer of condolences for those who have been affected by the storm.

And I've said a number of times that we're more than allies, we're family and it always feels that way when, you know, I'm working with our colleagues. You know, we have common interests, common values and so I think we've done a lot for the last three and a half years to continue to

strengthen our alliance and we look forward to continuing to work with you and your team to move even further.

But thanks for your leadership, Mr. President. Again, it's been a great three and a half years and I look forward to another three and a half or another four in building --- strengthening this relationship. So, thanks.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Thank you. Thank you very much indeed.

Well, the --- I think that the... What has --- all of the things that we have done in the previous months has been really --- serves really to make all our alliances and partnerships more --- actually have a working relationship in the sense that lines of communications have been open and again we are doing many more things together.

I cannot stress enough the trilateral agreement that we signed in the... ***END OF LIVESTREAM***