

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Manila, Republic of the Philippines)

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
FERDINAND MARCOS
PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE

10:11 P.M. (Manila Time)

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Mr. President, Mrs. Ford, Mr. Justice, distinguished guests, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:

It is indeed a great honor for the Filipino people and for ourselves, the First Lady and your humble servant, to have as guests at tonight's dinner the President of the United States of America and his lady, and his daughter, and the members of his party.

It is my hope that my words tonight will record, even but to a modest degree, the appreciation that we feel for the honor that you have bestowed upon our country and people, Mr. President, for visiting us at this momentous period of Asia's and the Philippines' history.

Our relations are not only deep-rooted, they have been constant. We have had our differences, but as you can see from the demonstration not only of good will, but of affection, almost of hysteria, in the effort to welcome you and Mrs. Ford and your daughter and the members of your party, there is a deep reservoir of good will for America in the Philippines.

Our relations, the relations between the Philippines and the United States, is indeed different from any other relations between two countries. When, at the start of your historic journey, you said that your visit to the Philippines symbolizes the links and commitments of America to Asia, we took it as an affirmation that such a commitment to the peace of the world has not diminished, arising out of any changes in perception brought about by recent events.

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The United States, in times past, has opened and adjusted its perspectives on Asia and the Pacific, but the American response on any situation has always been the improvement of the quality of relations with its Pacific and Asian allies.

We are encouraged, too, by the fact that the political leadership of America has often initiated the basic policy, if there be any changes and adjustments, so with any of your allies, we will find America flexible.

Not only the occurrences in Vietnam, but the aspirations of the new nations of Asia, seem to have brought about a changed situation which challenges the historic commitment of the United States to the peace and stability of the region. All the new nations of Asia, ours included, now seek to fulfill a belated appointment with modernization.

All these nations now attempt to confront and change the conditions that have converted them into spawning grounds for conflict, dependent upon foreign assistance and susceptible to internal strife and workable for any intervention.

We seek a new basis for order, for harmony, and for cooperation, and what we seek we seem to see symbolized in your leadership, and in your effort at establishing a climate of global peace for this we extend to you congratulations on behalf of our people and on behalf of the leadership of Asia.

The visit of any American President to Asia and, more particularly, to the Philippines, has often generated within the framework of our relationship great expectations. We in the Philippines, Mr. President, see in your visit a similar and historic relation to those of your predecessors and also see in it the response of America to these new challenges of the new situation in Asia.

We have watched with admiration your efforts to establish this climate throughout the world, which would insure safety for each and every one. We think we understand the vision which has spawned the view to go through this global itinerary that has brought you to many continents.

Your visit to Asia seems to be in this direction. By this visit you have raised to a new stage the program, the effort to build a new international order and confirmed our faith that Asia retains and enjoys up to now a high priority in the American purpose abroad.

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But, beyond the broader significance of your visit to the American links to the future of Asia, is its significance to us, for it is of great moment to the Philippines. You come at a time when we seek readjustment of our relations. You come at a time when we must convert the weaknesses of such relations into areas of strength.

Again, we are encouraged by the candor and the generosity of spirit and of the mind with which you deal with these subjects.

We in the Philippines, Mr. President, are engaged in an earnest effort of social transportation, economic development, political modernization and, like any small developing country, of course we are sensitive to sovereignty, independence, dignity, national identity.

We seek to broaden our contacts with the world and yet we do not intend to diminish the ties that have sustained us for many generations, including the ties with the United States.

We seek to establish a self-reliant nation, hopefully strong in its defense and prosperous in its economy.

When we welcomed you this afternoon, Mr. President, I said, "America's destiny is that, while she alone may not be able to solve the problems of the world, certainly there is no serious problem of the world that can be solved without America."

This is a burden of the American people, and this is the weight of responsibility upon your shoulders. We, the Philipino people, do not intend to add to your burdens. It is our hope that we shall be able to carry our own weight and contribute, no matter how modestly, to the solution of the problems that confront the world and America.

As it is that while we pursue our programs for economic development and for security, we do not seek any special advantages, but certainly we hope that we shall not be disadvantaged by the special positions of other trading nations.

If by virtue of any arrangements of treaties there should be deliveries to our country of foreign equipment and technology, we seek arrangements and understandings wherein we shall so build our capability that in the future this will render obsolete and unnecessary farther and future deliveries of military aid to our people.

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If there is any valid and noble contribution that the United States can make to the small developing countries of Asia, perhaps it is the development of the indigenous capabilities of these nations in order that they may meet any threat to their security with honor and dignity.

Yes, Mr. President, it is our dream to establish a country that is self-reliant. It is our hope that as we do so, we can -- with this same self-reliance -- say our strongest and most dependable ally is still the United States for our treaties are security we do not interpret to mean, nor is it the policy of our Government, to call upon American foot soldiery to come to defend our soil.

It shall be the firm result of our Government and of our people that we shall defend our own soil with our own troops. It is the firm resolve of the political leadership of this country and of our people that we shall so strengthen ourselves by the exercise of political will that we shall be able to meet any internal or external threat.

In this manner, do we say, can we contribute to the solution of the problems of the world and lessen the burdens of our ally and partner, the United States of America.

If we believe in the commitments of the United States, it is not because America has not suffered any setbacks, for it has, but it is because whatever be those setbacks the new leaders have always sought to enrich and renew such commitments.

We see new leadership, Mr. President, the constancy of such commitments and the vigor of the American imagination to meet these complex problems that threaten the lives of nations and the survival of humanity itself.

We have listened to you, we have watched you and you have proved this with your words and with your actions and shown the quality of the energy that you have imparted to this great endeavor.

It is, therefore, with great affection that we say, Mr. President, we, the Filipino people, pray for your success.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I now request you to join me, to rise and join me in a toast to the continued success and health of the President of the United States of America, the prosperity of the American people and the strengthening friendship between the United States and the Philippines.

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THE PRESIDENT: President Marcos, Mrs. Marcos, distinguished guests, honored friends:

I come to the Philippines at the end of a strenuous but very exciting journey. Two nations once regarded as distant but with the modern means of transportation are now our neighbors in a new and inter-dependent world.

On the way home, I have stopped here to visit America's old and very dearest friend, and to be exposed to the very gracious and the world renowned Philippine hospitality which is not exceeded in any place in the world.

Throughout this trip, we have been most graciously welcomed and warmly received, but the experience this afternoon, Mr. President, driving from the airport to the Palace was an exhilarating, unbelievable experience. To see the many, many traditions, the songs, the gowns, the actions of all of your people was a great experience. It showed diversity in your society, but it reminded me of something I learned in Sunday school a good many years ago.

My then Sunday school teacher told me of the beauty of Joseph's coat was its many colors, so I say to you in the Philippines, the strength of your nation is its diversity which has been woven into a strength that will forever be a pillar for your great country.

Mr. President, throughout this trip I have observed an international sense of community, a shared a commitment to peace and a better life for all peoples. I found a common determination to have the leaders of the world, the leaders of the nations to start their own courses, to shape their own character, and I saw a growing awareness that this determination of individuals and of nations to be independent and self-reliant is a constructive force in the world in which we live today.

It encourages a sense of respect for one's self and for others. And that is the basis of a real community of nations in the world in which we live.

Today in the Philippines I find something far more. Our two nations have a most unique history of shared experiences and similarity of outlook. We have both known the pain of war.

President Marcos and myself are only two out of many, many thousands of both nations who fought together in earlier years, one in the forests and fields of Luzon and the other on the waters of the Philippine Sea.

As individuals and as nations, however, we have both tasted the bitterness of defeat, the satisfaction of joint devotion to a common goal and the lesson that victory once achieved is only the beginning of a new challenge.

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We have already observed the common determination of people throughout Asia and the rest of the world to achieve a more satisfying life. That determination is shared by you in the Philippines and by us in the United States.

We have learned as nations to recognize that we need not all be identical to survive. We have learned that we need to treat one another, different or similar as we may be, in a spirit of generosity and respect.

This spirit which our nations share is the essence of real hospitality. It is one of the very special elements that strengthens our sense of common interests in each other's security and well being. In that spirit, Mr. President, let me offer a toast to you, to Mrs. Marcos, to the people of the Philippines and to the mutual respect and sense of community that unite us as two great republics.

END

(AT 10:32 P.M. Manila time)