

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s  
SPEECH AT THE COURTESY CALL BY THE HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL  
DELEGATION AND PARTICIPANTS OF THE 31ST TRADE MISSION OF THE  
FILIPINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF HAWAII**

Heroes Hall, Malacañan Palace

February 22, 2024

(00:00:00)

I suppose we have to start with the traditional Hawaiian greeting, Aloha.

[Crowd: Aloha]

And welcome!

For those who have come from Hawaii, originally from Hawaii, welcome to the Philippines. For our Hawaiian, Filipino-Hawaiian members here, welcome back to the Philippines and welcome to you all to the Palace. And I'm so happy to be able to welcome you here.

As I can see, the work that you are doing is something that's very important for all of us. Of course, the connection between Hawaii and the Philippines and especially the northern Philippines, where myself and the Executive Secretary come from, is quite a long-standing one. And that immediately brings us to my own experience.

And despite the difficult circumstances that surrounded our stay in Hawaii, Hawaiians made it as pleasant and as best as we could make it. And for that, we will never forget and we will be forever grateful.

(00:01:23)

Now onto the trade missions that you have been conducting and the possibilities that you have been exploring in terms of strengthening the economic ties and trade ties between Hawaii specifically and the Philippines, I think there is a great deal of potential there.

As there are so many similarities in terms of what are needed and what needs to be done in terms of the state of Hawaii and in the Philippines and in specific areas of the Philippines.

And it is very important that we in this administration have really done all we can to encourage the strengthening of those exchanges because we consider it very, very important. We have always come to a very clear principle that the only way forward in terms of the economy in the Philippines and for that matter, for the rest of the world, is trade.

And although we had to be a little protectionist during the pandemic and we had to protect our own people first before anything else, well, the situation has changed. The circumstances have changed.

And now I think we are presented with so many grand opportunities that we should --- it behooves us to do our best to try and explore those, to make those potentialities into reality. And there are many, many areas that we can do that.

For our part in the Philippines, what we have been trying to do is to make the investments or the exchanges easier so that it is more transparent, more accountable and in terms of cost as well.

I mean, all of these, the supply chain problems that we've been encountering around the world, those are the problems that we have tried to remedy and to alleviate. And I think that we have succeeded to an extent. We will continue to work in that direction because, again, trade is important to us.

And specifically for Hawaii, trade is particularly important to the Philippines because, as you say, that connection between the Philippines and Hawaii, and especially northern Philippines and Hawaii, is really quite traditional already, we can say.

And so, again, I think I see many grand opportunities and I thank you for coming and to explore those opportunities and try to make them into reality for the betterment of both Hawaii and your partners here in the Philippines.

So, again, as I said, since you say that you have a special place in your hearts, in like fashion, I have a special place in my heart for Hawaii, especially the people of Hawaii [applause] for the kindnesses that we were shown. I mean it on a more personal, intimate level.

The kindnesses that we were shown, as again, in difficult circumstances are something that we will forever be grateful for and that we will never forget. And therefore, you have your number one supporter here in the Philippines. [cheers and applause]

Maraming salamat po! Mahalo! Thank you very much.

(00:05:20)

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