

Magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat!

Lubos kong ikinararangal na makasama kayong lahat ngayon!

On this solemn occasion, we come together to honor the courageous souls who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Battle of Bataan, 83 years ago. With profound reverence, I pay tribute to the memory of the fallen, marking a defining moment to reaffirm our shared commitment to draw lessons from the past, as we stand united beneath the towering Memorial Cross.

Among us today are the brave veterans whose selflessness and service paved the way for the peace and freedom we now cherish. I extend my deepest respect and sincerest gratitude to each of you.

By facing our history and sincerely reflecting on the deeds and sacrifices during those dark times, we lay the very foundation of our future-oriented partnership – one built upon mutual respect, understanding and trust.

This very spirit of determination is what our predecessors

embodied when they shaped the principles of a Free and Open International Order, grounded in the rule of law. These enduring principles form the bedrock of peace, and it is our solemn duty to protect, preserve, and nurture them.

The current global security landscape is fraught with challenges. Unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force continue to intensify, creating a complex and uncertain environment.

Amidst this backdrop, the Philippines holds a critically strategic position for Japan and the entire region. A maritime nation, sharing vital sea lanes and situated at a crossroad of geopolitical significance.

Today, the bond between Japan and the Philippines has reached an unprecedented level of friendship and cooperation under the leadership of President Marcos.

This is clearly demonstrated in our shared efforts to enhance security and law enforcement capabilities. These include

the transfer of air surveillance radar systems to the Philippine Air Force and the provision of multi-role response vessels to the Philippine Coast Guard. Notably, the Philippines is the only country that received Japan's Official Security Assistance (OSA) for two consecutive years. Furthermore, the Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement, RAA, will further facilitate joint exercises, disaster relief operations, and enhance the interoperability of our forces.

Japan remains the largest provider of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the Philippines. Lying beyond this mountain, the 90-kilometer toll road connecting Subic, Clark, and Tarlac significantly contributes to the economy in the Central Luzon region, let alone those on-going flagship projects, such as the North South Commuter Railway and the Metro Manila Subway.

This year marks the 80th Anniversary of the end of the World War II. Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru visited Iwo-To Island last month, one of the sites of the fiercest battles 80 years

ago. He participated in a memorial ceremony together with the U.S. Secretary of Defense.

Over the past one year of my service in this country, I also have had the privilege of visiting and attending various places and events with the legacy of our shared history, including my visit to Corregidor, attendance to the 80th anniversary of Gulf of Leyte Landing, as well as to the Annual meeting of Filipino veterans' association of World War II. Each occasion gave me the opportunity to renew my pledge for peace.

For the past 80 years, Japan has proudly and unwaveringly followed the path of a peace-loving nation. Japan is determined to never allow the devastation of war to be repeated ever again. We will continue to make every possible effort, seizing every opportunity to safeguard peace and securing its lasting impact for both present and future generations.

Japan, the Philippines, and the United States, once divided by conflict, now stand united as allies and partners. We are not

only committed to be working closely bilaterally, but also to deepening our trilateral cooperation. This is an enduring achievement that holds far-reaching significance. We are now working hand-in-hand, strengthening our robust partnership to foster global peace and prosperity. Through sustained dialogue, our three nations have also forged a deeper, unbreakable bond of friendship.

I believe in our shared ability to carry our friendship forward, growing stronger with each passing generation. Whether in times of challenge or moments of peace, Japan remains resolute in its dedication to our shared future.

Last year, during the annual meeting of Filipino veterans' association of World War II, I heard Filipino youth sang a Japanese song called "Mirai e", Towards the Future. The song's message of gradually moving forward to the future resonated deeply with me.

Next year marks the 70th anniversary of the normalization

of the Philippine-Japan diplomatic relations. I am deeply committed to exerting all my humble efforts to ensure that this historic occasion further strengthens the bond between our nations, together with all the partners and friends present here today, whose support and collaboration are vital to realizing our shared future.

Once again, my deepest respect and sincere gratitude to all the veterans who fought for the peace of our nations and the world. Now, it is our responsibility to honor their legacy by further strengthening these bonds and by ensuring the values they fought for endure for generations to come.

Mabuhay ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas!

Mabuhay ang ating Trilateral Partnership!

Maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat.