

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines

June 24, 2008

President Bush. Madam President, it is a pleasure to welcome you back to the Oval Office. We have just had a very constructive dialog. First, I want to tell you how proud I am to be the President of a nation that—in which there's a lot of Philippine Americans. They love America, and they love their heritage. And I reminded the President that I am reminded of the great talent of the—of our Philippine Americans when I eat dinner at the White House. [Laughter]

President Macapagal-Arroyo. Yes.

President Bush. And the chef is a great person and a really good cook, by the way, Madam President.

President Macapagal-Arroyo. Thank you.

President Bush. We talked about our friendship, our bilateral relations, and we spent some time on foreign policy.

First, I expressed our deep condolences to those who suffered as a result of the typhoon. And I know there's some families that are hurting. Some are wondering whether or not their loved ones will, you know, reappear. We, the American people, care about the human suffering that's taking place, and we send our prayers.

Secondly, I informed the President—Secretary Gates informed the President, through me, that the United States will move the USS *Ronald Reagan*, a large aircraft carrier, to help with the assistance, along with other U.S. Navy assets. Madam President, we're happy to do it. We want to help our friends in a time of need.

We talked about, you know, food, and I assured the President we'll continue to help. We helped with rice in the past. And, you know, I'm proud of my country. We give a lot of food aid. And this is a time where America needs to step up, and we will, Madam President.

We talked about our mutual desire to advance—how important it is to move forward bilateral and multilateral trade agendas. I'm a—I believe trade is beneficial to both our countries. I'm hopeful we can get a Doha

round done; we strategized together about how we can move the process.

I congratulated the President on her strong stand on counterterrorism—more than strong stand—effective stand on counterterrorism as well as laying out a vision for peace. The President's been very strong in having a carrots-and-sticks approach. “Sticks,” of course, say we're not going to allow for people to terrorize our citizens; the “carrot” approach is that there's peace available.

And we talked about Burma—the area, the region. The President's been a very strong leader when it comes to the freedom agenda and human dignity.

And so, all in all, we had a very constructive talk. I'm proud you're here.

President Macapagal-Arroyo. Thank you.

President Bush. Thanks for coming.

President Macapagal-Arroyo. Thank you. Thank you all. Mr. President, with your permission, I'd like to address our countrymen in our native language.

[At this point, President Macapagal-Arroyo spoke in Tagalog, and her remarks were translated as follows.]

Interpreter. Fellow countrymen, America is a strong ally in supporting our efforts to strengthen our economy and reinforce our democracy. The Philippines and the United States have a strong relationship, and we are here today to discuss important bilateral issues with President Bush, members of his administration, and congressional leaders. As President Bush mentioned, we will focus our discussions, now more than ever, on food shortages, defense cooperation, and economic aid. Together with our friends, such as America, let us join forces and move our country forward towards the company of First World, developed nations over the next 20 years.

Long live the Philippines, and long live the friendship between the Philippines and the United States.

President Bush. I couldn't have said it better myself. [Laughter] Thank you, Madam President.

President Macapagal-Arroyo. Thank you. Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Executive Chef Cristeta Comerford.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung of Vietnam

June 24, 2008

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome to the Oval Office. I fondly remember my trip to your country. I remember the wonderful hospitality that you and your Government gave to Laura and me. I remember the thousands of people lining the street in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, and it was just a memorable trip. So it's my honor to welcome you back here.

We had a good dialog. We talked about economic cooperation. And we talked about educational cooperation. We talked about the need to work together on the environment. I thanked the Prime Minister for his work on accounting for the POWs and MIAs. We discussed the neighborhood and the region. We talked about the freedoms—religious and political freedom. And I told the Prime Minister that I thought the strides that the Government is making toward religious freedom is noteworthy, and I appreciated the efforts that he and his Government are making.

All in all, we had a very good discussion. Our relationship with Vietnam is getting closer, in a spirit of respect. And I thank you for coming to help make that relationship even stronger. Welcome.

Prime Minister Dung. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank you, Mr. President and American friends, for your warm hospitality.

I would like to tell you that Mr. President and I have just had successful talks in a friendly, constructive, and understanding spirit. And we took note, with great pleasure, of rapid development in the Vietnam-U.S. relationship toward a friendly and constructive partnership, multifaceted cooperation on the basis of equality, mutual respect, and mutual benefit. We agreed with each other on a wide

range of issues, which will be fully reflected in our adjoined statement.

And now I would like to give you some highlights of our conversation. Mr. President and I agreed to establish a new dialog mechanism at the senior level on the strategic matters of economics, education, environment, science, defense, and security. And President Bush reiterated his support for Vietnam's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity.

We agreed to establish a high-level education task force to effectively advance the education cooperation between our two countries. The two sides also agreed to set up a new subcommittee to assist Vietnam in conducting researches to respond to the climate change and the rising sea level.

And President Bush reaffirmed that the U.S. is actively reviewing Vietnam's request to join the GSP program and acknowledged Vietnam's request to be accorded the market economy status. The U.S. is also considering the import of fruits from Vietnam. Also, the two sides agreed to commence negotiations on a bilateral investment treaty.

Both sides also agreed to strengthen cooperation to address humanitarian issues left over by the war, such as the American MIA issue, mine clearing, remediation of the Agent Orange consequences, the Vietnamese MIA issue.

Ladies and gentlemen, my visit to the U.S. this time is the followup of the foreign policy of independence and sovereignty, diversification and multilateralization of our external relations. Vietnam wants to be friends with all country and trusted partners with all nations and nationalities in the international community. And along that line, with—Vietnam will continue to strengthen the fine relationship between Vietnam and the United States under the framework defined by the two countries' leaders.

I hope that with the fruitful outcome of my visit, the Vietnam-U.S. relationship will be elevated to new heights in the interest of both peoples, of peace, stability, and development cooperation in the region and the world.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you. Yes, sir.