

STATEMENT OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE JOINT PRESS EVENT

[Delivered at the Prime Minister's Office, Tokyo, Japan | 30 October 2017]

Your Excellency Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan; members of the Japanese delegation; my colleagues in the Philippine government; ladies and gentlemen of the press;

Good evening.

Allow me at the outset to thank His Excellency Prime Minister Abe for the warm reception and excellent arrangements accorded to me during this, my second, Official Visit to Japan.

As I indicated in our meeting today, I looked forward to returning to Tokyo at an earlier scheduled date. Events at home, however, required that I postpone the visit.

Prime Minister Abe expressed full understanding of my decision and the challenges we faced in Marawi City then. He conveyed ready support for our efforts to address the problem of terrorism and violent extremism. And, he offered timely assistance for the affected communities and residents.

It is, therefore, fitting and proper, that after the liberation of Marawi City from the grip of Maute terrorists, my first Official Visit overseas takes place in Japan --- a true friend who has stood squarely behind the Philippines in my country's onward advance [to] greater peace, progress and prosperity.

I am also honored to be the first ASEAN Head of State and Government to visit Japan since Prime Minister Abe's winning an overwhelming mandate.

Our discussion today were very warm, open and comprehensive.

As Strategic Partners, cooperation between the Philippines and Japan is expansive and multi-dimensional. Both sides recognized today that there is still ample room for even more significant growth in all areas of mutual concern.

I am pleased with Japan's reiteration that it is fully committed to -- as he described it -- "give flesh" to the 1 trillion yen or close to nine billion dollars pledge [of] assistance to the Philippines.

This covers huge impact and high value infrastructure projects that my country needs to sustain and spur our economic growth. There will be some of the most ambitious and groundbreaking projects, including the Metro Manila Subway project, and major developments in the regions and provinces.

I thanked Japan for its full support for our efforts to bring just and lasting peace in Mindanao. Apart from its involvement in the peace process, Japan is already on the ground as we proceed with reconstructing Marawi and rebuilding the lives of those affected.

In trade and investments, both sides agreed to ramp up further economic activities. We welcome the increasing investments from Japan in the Philippines and we are ready to work with responsible companies which we consider our new partners for growth.

We need to address many issues confronting the region and threats to the stability and security [in the] Asia-Pacific.

Foremost among our shared concern are developments in the Korean peninsula and the continuing missile launch tests of North Korea.

We condemn these tests and call on all concerned stakeholders to return to the negotiating table to peacefully resolve the situation.

While we concluded our summit meeting today, tomorrow, I will have the singular honor of [having an] audience with His Majesty, Emperor Akihito.

I am sincerely... I'm grateful for the kindness and compassion of Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko when Their Majesties visited the Philippines last year during the 60th anniversary of the normalization of Philippine-Japan diplomatic relations. I am eager to convey my deep respect and admiration [to] His Majesty.

Our commitment and resolve show the desire to further expand cooperative ties. I dare say that, considering what we have accomplished and achieved, the Philippines and Japan are building a golden age [for] our Strategic Partnership.

It's a commitment founded on the democratic values we hold dear. It's a resolve that has withstood the test of time. Working together, we should have much to show and to be proud of in the years to come.

Thank you.