

Remarks at the ASEAN-U.S. Ministerial Meeting

Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
National Convention Center
Hanoi, Vietnam
July 22, 2010

UNDER SECRETARY BASILIO: Your Excellency, Hillary Rodham Clinton. Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, we extend our warmest welcome to Her Excellency, Hillary Clinton, and the distinguished members of her delegation to the ASEAN Ministerial Conference with the United States of America.

The Philippines is, indeed, honored to be in the esteemed role as country coordinator for the ASEAN-U.S. dialogue relations. We see this meeting as an opportunity to further expand the ties between the ASEAN region and the United States, which have now been given a renewed vigor under the administration of President Barack Obama.

In the past year, since our last meeting in Thailand, we have seen great strides in our region's relations with the United States. It is now once again an important time for all of us to look at our achievements and exchange our views on how to move forward further in our cooperation in the political, security, economic, and social, cultural areas which are of the utmost importance and relevance for our mutual benefit.

It is also a good opportunity for us to reflect on the current situation in global and regional affairs, and offer our views and suggestions on how best we can jointly address them. Foremost among these concerns are the impact of the recent global financial crisis, the continuing war against terror, and the growing precariousness of the security situation in our region, and our neighbors.

We also take this opportunity for us to review the achievements coming from the historic first meeting of ASEAN and U.S. leaders in November 2009, and to come to a final arrangement for the second ASEAN-U.S. leaders meeting this year.

I look forward to a very productive exchange among all of us, as we proceed to discuss the important agenda at hand. I welcome all of you to (inaudible). And once again, thank you for your presence.

I would like to invite Her Excellency, Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State, to deliver her opening remarks.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you very much, Under Secretary Basilio. And thank you to the government and people of Vietnam for hosting this very important event. And it's a pleasure to see so many of my colleagues here today.

The ASEAN-U.S. Ministerial Meeting is an essential element of our increased engagement. President Obama and I both share a view that America's future is intimately tied to that of the Asia-Pacific. The United States is a Pacific nation, and we are committed to being an active partner with ASEAN and with all of you. Our partnership is rooted in common interests. We are committed to assisting the nations of Southeast Asia to remain strong and independent, and that each nation enjoys peace, stability, prosperity, and access to universal human rights.

The United States is very supportive and optimistic about the future of this region, because it is one that is rich in history, culture, and now economic growth: representing nearly 600 million people, America's sixth largest export market, and hosting more U.S. business investment than China. It anchors the wider Asia-Pacific, which is at the heart of our shared efforts to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of the 21st century.

Last year, when I attended our meeting in Thailand, my message was simple. The United States was recommitted to working with our partners in Southeast Asia to advance our shared interests and values. Today we will discuss our progress and the concrete steps we are taking to make good on this promise, including new investments in shared priorities and new avenues for cooperation.

We believe that Southeast Asia and the United States must cooperate effectively to deliver real results for all of our people. So let me thank our hosts for their hospitality, and thanks to all of you for your friendship and partnership. And I look forward to our discussion. Thank you, Under Secretary.

UNDER SECRETARY BASILIO: Very perceptive remarks. I now request the members of the media to leave the room for the procession. I thank you for (inaudible) the opening session.

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