

Remarks of Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr.
Turnover of 5 UH-1H Helicopters to Philippine Air Force
January 10, 2011
(As prepared for delivery)

Secretary Gazmin, General David, Lt General Rabena, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, *Magandang umaga sa inyong lahat.*

I am delighted to be here today for this very auspicious event and I would like to thank Secretary Gazmin for hosting this important ceremony.

For decades, the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines have nurtured a deep and enduring friendship and strategic alliance founded on shared ideals, shared struggle, and the spirit of cooperation and brotherhood. Our two nations believe in the power of democratic values, free markets, professionalism, and mutual security.

These 5 UH-1H Huey helicopters represent the final installment of helicopters pledged by former President George W. Bush in 2003 as an expression of our government's long-term commitment to assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines in its modernization.

The aircraft you see today will increase the Philippine Air Force's capability to move troops and supplies in their effort against the threats of terrorism. They will also help the entire nation in humanitarian relief efforts by increasing the Philippine Air Force's capability in search and rescue operations, as well as the delivery of critical emergency relief supplies in times of natural disasters or calamities.

I am honored to be a part of this momentous event and hope these aircraft serve the Philippine Air Force and the entire nation of the Philippines for many years to come. *Maraming salamat po at mabuhay kayong lahat!*