

**Remarks by Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr.**  
**USS Blue Ridge Reception**  
**As Prepared For Delivery**  
**August 4, 2010**

- Mayor Lim,
- Lieutenant General David,
- Dr. Binay,
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Cabinet Secretaries, Senators, Congressmen, Military Leaders, Distinguished Guests,
- Friends of the U.S. Embassy,

*Magandang gabi sa inyong lahat.*

Admiral Bird, Captain Lupton, and Sailors of the USS Blue Ridge, welcome to the Philippines and the Port of Manila. I'm honored to be here with you this evening.

I would like to thank Admiral Bird for co-hosting this reception with me, and to thank Captain Lupton for providing such a lovely and distinguished venue for this event.

I am delighted to welcome the USS Blue Ridge back to the Philippines for a goodwill visit. Let me thank the Philippine Navy and the crew of this ship who tomorrow will dedicate their time to build homes with Habitat for Humanity, to honor the veterans buried in Clark Cemetery, and to bring some smiles to the

children at the Gawad Kalinga village project. Let me invite you all to join me at Market Market tomorrow afternoon to listen to the Blue Ridge's "Far East Edition Rock Band" shake the stage.

While we celebrate the friendship and partnership between our two nations, let us remember that cooperation between our two militaries is a pillar of our shared freedom. Just over 60 years ago, the first USS Blue Ridge anchored off the shores of Leyte Gulf as General MacArthur fulfilled his promise to return, and the tides of war turned in our favor. To this day, our militaries remain close allies who plan, train and exercise together in order to offer relief from disaster, protect freedom from threats, and provide security to all. This visit by the modern-day Blue Ridge underscores our abiding respect and support for one another.

The success of this visit relies on many partners, civilian and military, and I want to thank you all for your work in making the ship's visit possible and productive. It's one more demonstration of how much we can achieve when we work together. Thanks to each and every one of you for your efforts in making sure that our friendship remains strong. Thank you all for coming tonight and for celebrating with us. I hope you enjoy the rest of the evening.