

Joint Statement of the United States-Philippines Ministerial Dialogue

I. Preamble

The U.S.-Philippines alliance is stronger than ever, reflecting the deep and abiding ties linking our two nations and forged through a history of shared sacrifice and common purpose. Seventy years ago this month, thousands of U.S. and Filipino troops served together in defense of our last strongholds at Corregidor and Bataan. Later, when we signed our Mutual Defense Treaty in 1951, we united against the spread of communism. Today, Americans and Filipinos are inextricably bound by common values and shared aspirations, including a commitment to democracy and the rule of law, building a robust economic partnership, and deepening people-to-people ties.

Our alliance remains an anchor for peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. With this in mind, our Ministers meet today in Washington to reaffirm the Manila Declaration signed by our governments on November 16, 2011 and to ensure that our alliance remains robust, agile, and responsive in order to meet changing global and regional dynamics. Our consultations seek to address common strategic and security objectives, promote economic cooperation, advance people-to-people ties, and enshrine principles of good governance and the rule of law.

The Ministers reaffirm our shared obligations under the Mutual Defense Treaty and our mutual commitment to the peace and security of the region.

II. Common Strategic Objectives

The United States and the Republic of the Philippines articulate the following shared objectives characterizing our collective and individual engagements in the Asia-Pacific region:

- Enhance peace, security, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific.
- Support efforts to increase cooperation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defense Ministers'

Meeting-Plus (ADMM+), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the East Asia Summit (EAS).

- Reaffirm our common interest in maintaining freedom of navigation, unimpeded lawful commerce, and transit of people across the seas and subscribe to a rules-based approach in resolving competing claims in maritime areas through peaceful, collaborative, multilateral, and diplomatic processes within the framework of international law, including as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- Recognizing the outstanding contributions of the Philippines as the ASEAN country coordinator for the United States since 2009, ensure a smooth transition as Burma assumes this role in July.
- Strengthen bilateral and regional cooperation on humanitarian and disaster relief preparedness activities and enhancing combined capabilities in responding to natural disasters.
- Support expanded regional counterterrorism cooperation through intelligence sharing and coordination of surveillance and interdiction efforts.
- Encourage the efforts at the regional and international levels including the East Asia Summit to promote nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We agreed that we should continue to work together to ensure compliance and implementation of relevant United Nations non-proliferation commitments and to pursue cooperation through multilateral mechanisms.
- Reduce all types of environmental degradation including illegal fishing, deforestation, poaching of endangered species, climate change, and destruction of coral reefs.
- Cooperate in the prevention and eradication of piracy.

III. Security Partnership

The United States and the Republic of the Philippines reaffirm our shared obligations under the Mutual Defense Treaty, which remains the foundation of the U.S.-Philippines security relationship. In seeking to enhance our security cooperation, we intend to do the following:

- Continue to hold discussions through the Bilateral Strategic Dialogue Defense Working Group and the Mutual Defense Board-Security Engagement Board on further enhancing the defense and security aspects of our alliance on the basis of reciprocity and mutual benefit, in accordance with both countries' domestic laws and constitutional processes, and the Mutual Defense Treaty, the Agreement Relating to Military Assistance, the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement and the Agreement Regarding the Treatment of United States Armed Forces Visiting the Philippines (Visiting Forces Agreement).
- Jointly explore modalities for strengthening the defense capabilities of the Philippines in order to establish a minimum credible defense posture through robust cooperative security assistance programs.
- Affirm that our respective military forces should be prepared to respond in a timely and effective way to the range of contingencies that may arise in our region, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and should be able to work with the armed forces of regional partners.
- Ensure that our collective defense capabilities and communications infrastructure are operationally and materially capable of countering the full spectrum of traditional and non-traditional threats.
- Cooperate on building the Philippines' maritime security presence and capabilities and strengthening its maritime domain awareness in order to contribute to national defense and enhanced regional security related to issues such as illegal fishing, transnational crime, and natural disasters. To that end, the United States intends to transfer a second High Endurance cutter to the Philippines this year.

- Review joint exercises and training activities and afford priority to those that have high value and great impact with regard to our common objectives, such as but not limited to maritime security.
- Continue our joint counterterrorism efforts, including through U.S. non-combat support to the Philippine security services in combating al-Qaida-linked terrorist groups in the southern Philippines.
- Continue joint training and exercises such as the recently completed Exercise Balikatan 2012 to enhance force interoperability.
- Support the National Coast Watch System and work to expand joint intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities to deter and respond proactively, rapidly, and seamlessly to various situations in the region.
- Enhance cooperation in information sharing in a timely manner particularly during emergent situations, and work towards establishing appropriate mechanisms for this purpose.
- Maintain our cooperation with respect to the protection of cyberspace. Enhance the resilience of critical infrastructure to counter cyber threats.
- Strengthen cooperation and participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

IV. Burgeoning Economic Relationship

The United States and the Republic of the Philippines are long-standing economic partners that share a mutual commitment to free trade, economic opportunity, and poverty reduction. We intend to work together to deepen and enhance our bilateral economic relationship through the following:

- Reaffirm the Partnership for Growth Joint Statement of Principles signed in Manila on November 16, 2011 and seek to mobilize a broad range of US and Philippine entities within and outside our governments to achieve a more accelerated, sustained, and inclusive growth path for the Philippines.

- Endeavor to increase bilateral trade and investment through continuing our Trade and Investment Framework Agreement discussions, among other efforts.
- Note our shared desire to continue discussing the Philippines' interest in eventually joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement. Seek to support cooperative activities that promote readiness in key areas, including mutually beneficial legislative measures that may serve as building blocks to the TPP.
- Continue implementation of the five-year, \$434 million (USD) Millennium Challenge Corporation compact between the United States and the Philippines in order to reduce poverty, promote inclusive economic growth, and create new opportunities for the Filipino people.
- Reaffirm the U.S.-Philippines customs and trade facilitation agreement signed during the 2011 APEC summit in Honolulu.
- Support programs to increase tourism exchanges between the two countries, and identify and address obstacles to more vibrant tourist exchanges.

V. Mutual Commitment to Government Transparency and the Rule of Law

Our nations are committed to principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention against Corruption, and other applicable international instruments related to human rights and good governance.

As joint steering committee members of the Open Government Partnership, we support a set of common principles guiding the relationship between governments and their citizenry. We support continued efforts to promote greater government transparency and the rule of law.

Among other measures, we intend to promote the establishment of a National Justice Information System for the Philippines, an integrated criminal justice database system that will facilitate the efficient recording, monitoring, tracking and reporting of crimes, cases, offenders, and victims.

We also intend to continue our close cooperation in countering the global scourge of trafficking in persons.

VI. Conclusion

The U.S.-Philippines alliance remains an essential element undergirding regional peace, security, and prosperity. As our nations reflect on the strength and durability of our alliance, we also look to enhance our relationship in order to address even more effectively the range of regional challenges and opportunities that are of interest to both our governments. Both nations therefore resolve to continue our regular consultation and coordination on these issues.