



ISSUE FOCUS: RP-US PARTNERSHIP IN FIGHT AGAINST TERROR

Safeguards built into Human Security Act of 2007 (Republic Act No.9372)

- Product of 6 years of debate in the Philippine legislature
- Observes balance between need for anti-terrorism legislation and respect for human rights
- Contains provision for compensation of up to Php 500,000.00 per day for incidents of wrongful arrest
- Exempts lawyers, journalists, doctors from breaking confidentiality in client, source, patient relationship
- Court approval required for surveillance, intercepts
- Creates Anti-terrorism Council to oversee implementation of the law to prevent abuse
- Provides vital role for the Commission on Human Rights in consonance with the Commission's mandate under the law
- Provides for creation of a Grievance Committee to receive complaints against actuations of police and law enforcement officials in implementation of the law
- Provides for creation of a joint legislative Oversight Committee with five members from each House of the Philippine Congress

US ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE PLAY KEY ROLE IN RP SUCCESS AGAINST TERRORISTS

US economic and military assistance to the Philippines has played a key role in its current success in the fight against terrorism. Cooperation between the Philippines and the U.S. has enabled the Philippine Government to effectively implement a strategy that is anchored on a strong development agenda aimed at addressing the root causes of terrorism and conflict.

U.S. military assistance has been valuable in terms of establishing a safe and secure environment that allows the Philippines to bring in and implement much needed economic development projects to remote and poor communities usually used and exploited by terrorists as operational and logistical areas and bases.

U.S. economic assistance has been instrumental in re-integrating former combatants into the mainstream and improving the quality of life in those conflict affected areas and communities.

By making a positive impact in these communities, the Philippine Government has been successful in terms of isolating terrorist groups. This enables the Philippines to take effective action based on valuable intelligence provided by these



Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney at a turnover ceremony for 10 UH-1H helicopters that were refurbished under a U.S. government program aimed at enhancing the capabilities of the Philippine Air force to conduct counter-terrorism and humanitarian and disaster relief operations

communities who are motivated by the promise of true peace and progress.

The effectiveness of US assistance to the Philippines can be traced to decades of close cooperation and engagement between both countries.

AS NEW TERROR ACT NEARS IMPLEMENTATION, STRONG SAFEGUARDS EMPHASIZED

The partnership between the Philippines and the US in the fight against terror has always been underpinned by a common commitment to fundamental values that both countries share: democracy, freedom and the rule of law.

With the implementation of the Philippine Human Security Act of 2007 to begin in July, these same values remain at the core of all Philippine Government measures against terrorism.

At the forefront of implementing the new law will be the Philippine National Police (PNP), which has already carried out broad efforts to ensure that police officers will be well-prepared to implement the anti-terrorism law in conformity to its provisions and duty to ensure the protection and respect for civil liberties and human rights.

Emphasis has been placed on the safeguards that have been built into the new law (see sidebar).

Under the instructions of PNP chief Director General Oscar Calderon, all police regional, provincial and station commanders initiated extensive training and education on the implementation of the new law for the police officers under their command.



Philippine police officers at a seminar at the Philippine National Police Headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City, Philippines

Chief Superintendent German Doria, chief of the PNP Human Rights Affairs Office (HRAO), said there are simultaneous seminars and training courses offered to police officers in the regions and provinces about the counter-terror law. "We hope that by July, when the Human Security Act of 2007 takes effect, all police officers are already familiar with the provisions of the law," Doria said. The HRAO was specifically tasked to monitor and

US ASSISTANCE TO RP . . .

This close relationship has enabled the Philippines and the US to establish frameworks and mechanisms by which US assistance and aid is channeled to the Philippines in a more responsive and effective manner.

Military assistance is determined through the conduct of a joint assessment of needs and implementation is closely overseen by the US Embassy through the Joint US Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG) who exercises extensive oversight regarding the utilization and disposition of US military assistance and equipment. In addition, US military assistance conforms closely to the Philippine Defense Reform Program (PDRP) which is a framework for professionalizing and modernizing the Philippine military.

Assistance under the PDRP is systems based and concentrates on mobility, logistical and communications platforms and systems that not only enhances military operational capability in combat through structural and organizational reforms and equipment upgrades, but also develops a better capability to respond to natural disasters and to conduct disaster relief operations.

On the other hand, US counterterrorism assistance, training and equipment has been effectively utilized in the war against terrorism as attested to by recent successes of Philippine security forces against the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group. It is interesting to note that a significant portion of this assistance comes in the form of civic action projects

that entails the building of roads, schools, wells and health centers and the conduct of medical and dental missions.

Furthermore, aside from JUSMAG, a US joint task force in Mindanao works closely with Philippine military forces involved in counter-terrorism operations that primarily benefit from this type of assistance.

The same process of assessment, consultation and oversight between the Philippine and US governments also applies to US economic assistance and other forms of aid packages where USAID plays a key role in the joint development and implementation of economic assistance packages and projects in the Philippines.

POLICE TO IMPLEMENT ANTI-TERROR LAW . . .

check on the operations of police officers especially in anticipation of the implementation of the Human Security Act of 2007.

Calderon said extensive training will help prevent police operatives from committing errors, including wrongful arrest, which may also prove costly to police offenders. The law provides that

a victim of erroneous arrest is entitled to compensation of P500,000 a day.

Calderon said the training also aims to address the apprehension of some sectors that the Human Security Act of 2007 might be used by the government as an instrument for political repression and oppression.

He had earlier directed the PNP Legal Service to link up with the University of the Philippines Law Center for extensive workshop training for PNP members. The UP Law Center had been very active in providing the PNP with continuing education and training on subjects related to law enforcement, human rights and the Omnibus Election Code.



FROM THE CORNER OF MASSACHUSETTS AND BATAAN

As a frontline state in the war on terrorism, the Philippines is well aware of the value of alliances and global cooperation in dealing with the problem.

An aspect of these critical alliances and partnerships is how it enhances my country's ability to combat terrorist groups and effectively address the roots of terrorism through development and poverty alleviation programs.

This is a view that is shared by the Philippines' most important

and key ally and bilateral partner, the United States of America. In the latest US national strategy to combat terrorism released in September of 2006, the US government recognizes the need and importance to strengthen its coalitions and partnerships to maintain a united front against terrorism. This component of the strategy calls for building and enhancing the capabilities of its allies to track and defeat terrorists.

US efforts to assist the Philippines and build up its capabilities, not only in the area of security but also in terms of economic development, have been quite successful.

The regional terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah has failed to establish any form of safe haven in Southern Philippines while their local affiliate, the Abu Sayyaf, have suffered heavy losses against Philippine military forces.

Furthermore, gains made by joint Philippine-US counterterrorism cooperation programs comple-

mented by US security assistance in combat operations against terrorists have been reinforced with a robust socio-economic program aimed at eradicating the roots of conflict and violence.

US economic assistance has played just as vital a role as security assistance in terms of isolating the terrorists and degrading their capability to conduct acts of terror and violence.

Much of this success in maximizing the potential benefits of US assistance and cooperation is due to well established frameworks and systems that ensures that all US aid is properly focused and utilized for the purposes and objectives it was intended to achieve.

As can be seen, US security and economic interests in the Southeast Asian region has been well served by its faith and confidence in one of its longstanding and dependable ally, the Philippines.

Major Philippine-US Joint Military Training Exercises

- **BALIKATAN (BK)** is an annual bilateral Philippines - US exercise that consists of a staff exercise, Humanitarian and Civic Assistance / Civil Military Operations (HCA/CMO), and Field Training Exercise (FTX). BALIKATAN fosters interoperability between Philippine and US military forces and enhances the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) counterterrorism capabilities.

- **COOPERATION AND READINESS AFLOAT TRAINING (CARAT)** is an annual maritime exercise between Philippine and US naval forces. CARAT enhances the interoperability of Philippine and US naval forces and develops Philippine maritime security capabilities

- **SAGIP** is an annual multilateral gaming seminar dealing with humanitarian assistance and disaster response

- **HANDA** is an annual Philippine - US crisis action planning seminar that focuses on coordinated and combined operations

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