



FACT SHEET

U.S.- PHILIPPINES

BILATERAL DEFENSE GUIDELINES

On May 3, 2023, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III and Philippine Secretary of the Department of National Defense Carlito Galvez established the *Bilateral Defense Guidelines* to modernize alliance cooperation in service of the United States and the Philippines’ shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific region. The guidelines reaffirm that an armed attack in the Pacific, including anywhere in the South China Sea, on either of their public vessels, aircraft, or armed forces – which includes their Coast Guards – would invoke mutual defense commitments under Articles IV and V of the 1951 U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty. Recognizing that threats may arise in several domains – including land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace – and take the form of asymmetric, hybrid, and irregular warfare and gray-zone tactics, the guidelines chart a way forward to build interoperability in both conventional and non-conventional domains.

The guidelines are informed by the following goals with the aim of strengthening the United States and the Philippines’ combined deterrence in an evolving security environment, including to:

- ▶ Reaffirm the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty’s enduring relevance in addressing both current and emerging threats;
- ▶ Foster a common understanding of roles, missions, and capabilities within the framework of the alliance to face regional and global security challenges;
- ▶ Drive unity of effort across all areas of bilateral security and defense cooperation to sustain focus on principal regional security concerns; and
- ▶ Guide priority areas of defense cooperation to address both conventional and non-conventional security challenges of shared concern.

The guidelines identify multiple lines of effort to advance these objectives, including the following:

MODERNIZE DEFENSE CAPABILITIES

- ▶ **Coordinate closely on the Philippines’ defense modernization**, including through the completion of a Security Sector Assistance Roadmap, to identify priority defense platforms and force packages that will bolster combined deterrence and capacity to resist coercion.
- ▶ **Prioritize the procurement of interoperable defense platforms** sourced from U.S. programs and Philippine national defense procurement and funding initiatives.
- ▶ **Expand investments in non-materiel defense capacity building** including through education and training exchanges, exercises, and other operational activities.

DEEPEN INTEROPERABILITY

- ▶ **Orient bilateral exercises and activities around improving our combined ability to counter armed attacks** on either country as well as threats in space and cyberspace, while expanding the scope, scale, and complexity of exercises.
- ▶ **Expand cooperation on maritime security and maritime domain awareness**, including through the continued conduct of combined maritime activities, including but not limited to joint patrols.
- ▶ **Deepen cooperation under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA)** to strengthen interoperability, including through infrastructure improvements; enhanced joint use of facilities; advancement of additional maritime security, maritime domain awareness, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief capabilities; and rotational U.S. access to Agreed Locations.

ENHANCE BILATERAL PLANNING AND INFORMATION-SHARING

- ▶ **Conduct coordinated analysis, tabletop exercises, and training and exercises** to reinvigorate bilateral planning and coordination efforts; assess bilateral requirements; and advance common objectives and approaches to shared challenges.
- ▶ **Develop adaptable decision-making processes and communication procedures** to support flexible, timely, whole-of-government bilateral coordination and action to respond to conventional and unconventional warfare.
- ▶ **Broaden information sharing on early indicators of threats to the peace and security** of both countries to ensure preparedness to address principal challenges confronting the alliance.
- ▶ **Strive toward real-time information sharing** in collaboration with other departments and agencies to support deeper interoperability and operational coordination.
- ▶ **Enhance information security** through consultations on policies, practices, and procedures for the protection of classified defense and military information.

COMBAT TRANSNATIONAL AND NON-CONVENTIONAL THREATS

- ▶ **Improve cyber defense and cyber security cooperation** to secure critical infrastructure and protect against attacks emanating from state and non-state actors.
- ▶ **Pursue capacity-building activities to respond to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear-related attacks** and to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

CONTRIBUTE TO GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

- ▶ **Sustain participation in multilateral fora**, anchored in shared support for ASEAN centrality.
- ▶ **Prioritize trilateral and other forms of multilateral cooperation** based on common issues of shared concern, including pursuing opportunities for third-party participation and observation in bilateral U.S.-Philippine defense activities.



U.S. Department of Defense