



## PHILIPPINES

### Background

The Republic of the Philippines, made up of more than 7,000 separate islands, gained its independence from the Spanish empire on June 12, 1898. Immediately the country was occupied by the United States, which defeated the Spanish in the Spanish-American War. Until 1942, the United States administered the Philippines with the aim of preparing the

islands for eventual independence, facilitated by the 1935 Tydings-McDuffie Act which made the Philippines a self-governing commonwealth. In 1942, the Japanese gained control of the islands for the duration of World War II. However, the United States joined local efforts to oust the Japanese, and in 1946, the United States granted the war-ravaged country independence, immediately extending substantial post-war reconstruction assistance.

The first few years of independence were rocky and marked by a communist rebellion that lasted until it was successfully quelled by President Raymon Magsaysay in 1953. Subsequent presidents sought to rebuild the Philippines and increase its ties to its Asian neighbors. In 1972, Ferdinand Marcos, who had been elected president in 1965, declared martial law under the auspices of fighting a renewed communist rebellion. During his reign, Marcos ruled predominantly by decree and civil liberties were severely restricted, with the government maintaining powers of arbitrary arrest and detention. Even though martial law formally concluded in 1981, the government remained authoritarian in nature. The 1983 assassination of popular opposition leader Benigno Aquino galvanized opposition to Marcos and



elections were planned ahead of schedule to minimize the potential disorder. Corazon Aquino, the widow of the assassinated leader, and her opposition party, the United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO), were supported by most of the population, yet the elections resulted in victory for Marcos. The election's outcome was denounced by international observers, including the U.S. Senate, citing immense election fraud on the part of Marcos and his supporters. Widespread peaceful demonstrations against the election results led Marcos to flee the country and enter into exile in Hawaii, granted safe passage by U.S. President Ronald Reagan. Corazon Aquino subsequently became president of the Philippines in 1986.

Since the overthrow of Marcos' regime, subsequent governments have made progress toward improving government institutions and strengthening democratic governance, although the system is not yet completely stable. The current president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, was elected vice president in 1998, and served a partial term as president from 2001-2004 when she replaced President Joseph Ejercito Estrada who faced impeachment on corruption charges. On May 10, 2004, Arroyo ran for a full-term as president and won a close race. However, when allegations of election fraud emerged in 2005, massive demonstrations were organized, with protestors demanding her resignation. Impeachment charges were brought against Arroyo, although both the Supreme Court and Congress later cleared her of wrong-doing and dropped the charges. Arroyo has faced opposition from within her own government as well—members of the armed forces attempted to unseat her in 2003 and, in February 2006, rumors of a military-led coup caused her to declare a state of emergency, during which the government assumed the power to arbitrarily arrest and detain citizens without charge, for indefinite periods of time. Demonstrators clashed with police during protests against the suspension of civil liberties. The state of emergency was formally lifted on March 3, 2006, but Arroyo's popularity, already damaged by the election scandal, has suffered as a result.

The Philippines has played a major role in developing political, economic, and security structures in Asia. As a founding member state of both the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the Philippines has continually sought to engage its neighbors and other developing countries on economic and security matters through participation in multilateral fora. In 1992, the Philippines also joined the Non-Aligned Movement – a group of over 100 developing countries whose policies are nonaligned with respect to great power conflicts. The Philippines has maintained close ties with the United States since attaining independence, evidenced by the presence of U.S. military bases on the islands, a legacy of World War II. The closure of the U.S. military bases in the Philippines in 1992 – forced when the Philippine Senate rejected continuation of the 1947 Military Bases Agreement – created tension at first, but eventually ushered in an era of closer friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

The U.S. State Department's 2006 Human Rights Report noted that although human rights are generally respected in the Philippines, human rights abuses continued to be committed by the government security forces, both against and insurgents and terrorist groups, as well as civilians and government officials. Numerous people, including journalists, were murdered during 2006 in a rash of extrajudicial killings. Security officers and members of the police were implicated in some of these killings, but few had been successfully prosecuted by the end of the year. The Philippine National Police (PNP), which is under the authority of the Department of Interior and local governments, has been cited by the Committee on Human Rights (CHR) as the perpetrator of the majority of fatal human rights abuses it is investigating. Additionally, 2005 saw an increase in assassinations of leftist activists, and members of the security forces have been implicated in these assassinations, although no one has been convicted for the murders. According to the State Department report, police and local governments have condoned abuses such as extrajudicial killings as an effective anti-terrorist and anti-

criminal tactic; this lack of political will, plus a corrupt and inefficient judiciary have fostered a climate of impunity among the security forces. However, an effort is underway to reform the PNP, and approximately half of the 4,600 cases brought against PNP officers were resolved by the end of 2005. Freedom of speech, press, and assembly are generally respected in the Philippines, although certain civil liberties were suspended in February 2006, during Arroyo's declared state of emergency. However, citizens maintained the right to peacefully change their government via free and fair elections.

The Philippines has struggled with internal insurgencies since its independence in 1946. Although the vast majority of the population of the Philippines is Christian (85 percent Catholic, and 9 percent Protestant), there is a significant Muslim minority (5 percent). The government of the Philippines has faced threats from Muslim separatist groups – chief among them the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) – who want an independent state on the island of Mindanao. However, peace talks that began under former President Fidel Ramos in the mid-1990s, and were continued via dedicated peace negotiations in 2003, have established an internationally-monitored cease-fire, although sporadic violence occurs. Communist insurgents, who seek a Marxist state, continue to operate nation-wide, perpetrating attacks on civilians and government forces alike. The leading communist militant group, the New People's Army (NPA) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), are both designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations by the U.S. State Department and are responsible for numerous human rights abuses including killings, use of child soldiers, and hostage taking. The State Department's 2006 Terrorism report noted that 93 terrorist attacks had occurred during the year and, in August 2006, the government commenced a concerted attack on ASG and JI operations, called "Operation Ultimatum." Previous years' reports have made note of the "disturbing" trend of increased cooperation between ASG, the regional terrorist organization Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), and the Rajah Sulaiman Movement (RSM), exemplified by a coordinated attack in February 2005 on three separate cities involving sophisticated explosives.

### **U.S. Military Assistance Prior to Sept. 11, 2001**

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Between 1992 and 1998, the Philippines actively submitted information on its weapons imports to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, including extensive imports of U.S. weapons that included missiles and missile launchers, armored combat vehicles, combat aircraft, attack helicopters warships, and large caliber artillery systems. After 1998, however, no reports of U.S. imports were filed with the UN Register.

From 1990 though 2001, the Philippines received over \$25 million in Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) and over \$650 million in Foreign Military Sales (FMS). During the same period the Philippines also received over \$20.1 million in International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds, and over \$370.3 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF), for a total of over \$390.5 million in security assistance. The majority of this assistance was provided in the early in the 1990s after which U.S. security assistance declined, in response to the forced closure of U.S. military bases in 1992.

### **U.S. Military Assistance Since Sept. 11, 2001**

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The Philippines expressed support for the United States and for the war on terrorism following Sept. 11, 2001. Immediately after the Sept. 11 attacks, Arroyo offered substantial aid such as over-flight

privileges, use of military bases, and intelligence cooperation and logistics support to sustain U.S. efforts to track down al-Qaida. The Philippines also contributed troops to the U.S. coalition in Iraq, but withdrew in July 2004, after terrorists kidnapped a Filipino hostage. As a country that both faces terrorism within its own borders and cooperates with the United States in its counterterrorism mission, the State Department considers the Philippines to be a “front-line state” in the war on terror. As a result, the United States has assisted the Philippines in efforts to capture ASG terrorists, including those responsible for the kidnapping of U.S. citizens. The Philippines was also designated a “major non-NATO ally” in 2003, in recognition of the long-standing U.S.-Philippine military relationship, and its cooperation in counterterrorism efforts. This status makes the Philippines eligible for greater defense cooperation and training with the United States, and gives the country greater access to U.S. weapons systems.

In 2003, the Philippines experienced several terrorist attacks on the island of Mindanao, including the bombing of the International Airport in Davao that left 17 dead, and the Sasa Wharf bombing that left 15 dead. Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has vowed to work more closely with allies such as the United States to pursue Islamic militants in the Philippines and, on Jan. 16, 2007, Philippine forces killed a top ASG member, Abu Sulaiman, who was wanted in connection to a 2004 ferry bombing that killed over 100 people. Sulaiman was also wanted by the United States for his role in the abduction and murder of American tourists in 2001.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, U.S. security assistance to the Philippines has continued at healthy levels, with increases in military assistance appropriations and the addition of new counterterrorism funding sources. In the five years since Sept. 11, the Philippines has received over fifteen times the amount of military assistance that it received in the five years prior to Sept. 11. In FY 03, the Philippines was the largest Asian recipient of IMET funds, and the second-largest recipient worldwide (\$2.4 million), and IMET appropriations increased each year after, although IMET requests for FY 07 and FY 08 are slightly lower than FY 06 appropriations. The Philippines has consistently received tens of millions of dollars in FMF since FY 02 but, as with IMET, FY 07 and 08 levels are lower than in previous years. However, the Philippines is still slated to receive roughly \$33 million in military assistance over the next two fiscal years.

In the five years since Sept. 11, U.S. arms sales to the Philippines have totaled 63 percent more than during the five years prior to Sept. 11. Although total FMS were only \$30 million higher than prior to FY 02, DCS increased markedly, beginning in FY 04. Arms sales projections for FY 07 and FY 08, however, demonstrate substantial forthcoming FMS sales worth hundreds of millions of dollars. In FY 02, the Philippines also received five cargo trucks and a Coast Guard PC-1 vessel through the Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program, worth \$30 million.

The United States has provided the Philippines with several sources of counterterrorism training and funding. The Republic of Philippines is a beneficiary of the Regional Defense Counterterrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) and received \$200,000 in FY 06, with \$175,000 appropriated for FY 07. Since FY 03, the Philippines has received funding for counterterrorism training through the Foreign Operations budget’s Anti-Terrorism Assistance program (NADR-ATA), which is part of the Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Activities account. The Philippines received over \$4 million in FY 06, and was slated to receive a similar amount in FY 07, and \$3.5 million has been requested for FY 08.

Since 1991, the United States and the Philippines have participated in the Balikatan joint exercise, designed to improve interoperability between the two nations’ forces and to increase the Philippines’

ability to withstand an external or terrorist attack. Balikatan was suspended between 1995 and 1999, when tensions arose over basing on Philippine soil, but resumed in 1999. Balikatan 2007 was initially cancelled when a Philippine court refused to return to U.S. custody a U.S. Marine convicted of raping a Filipino woman, who is appealing his 40 year prison sentence. However, on Jan. 2, 2007, the United States announced that the Marine had been transferred to the U.S. Embassy in Manila and that the training exercises would resume.

| <b>U.S. Military Assistance and Sales to Philippines, FY 90 - FY 08</b> |              |               |              |               |              |
|---|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
|   | <b>IMET</b>  | <b>FMF</b>    | <b>DCS</b>   | <b>FMS</b>    | <b>EDA</b>   |
| <b>1990</b>   | \$2,445,000  | \$140,395,000 | \$12,068,000 | \$109,196,000 | n/a          |
| <b>1991</b>   | \$2,671,000  | \$185,543,000 | \$1,325,000  | \$108,240,000 | n/a          |
| <b>1992</b>   | \$2,475,000  | \$25,000,000  | \$1,915,000  | \$98,257,000  | n/a          |
| <b>1993</b>   | \$2,539,000  | \$15,000,000  | \$723,000    | \$39,710,000  | \$0          |
| <b>1994</b>   | \$876,000    | \$0           | \$1,329,000  | \$45,129,000  | \$294,687    |
| <b>1995</b>   | \$1,193,000  | \$0           | \$1,706,000  | \$57,881,000  | \$7,602,932  |
| <b>1996</b>   | \$1,210,000  | \$0           | \$2,308,000  | \$88,652,000  | \$8,925,276  |
| <b>1997</b>   | \$1,295,000  | \$0           | \$559,000    | \$28,393,000  | \$0          |
| <b>1998</b>   | \$1,278,000  | \$0           | \$1,583,000  | \$36,548,000  | \$0          |
| <b>1999</b>   | \$1,348,000  | \$1,000,000   | \$815,000    | \$17,657,000  | \$11,138,309 |
| <b>2000</b>   | \$1,415,000  | \$1,437,000   | \$867,000    | \$9,702,000   | \$8,709,593  |
| <b>2001</b>   | \$1,436,000  | \$2,342,000   | \$53,000     | \$18,789,000  | \$8,820,273  |
| <b>1990-2001</b>  | \$20,181,000 | \$370,717,000 | \$25,251,000 | \$658,154,000 | \$45,491,070 |
| <b>1997-2001</b>  | \$6,772,000  | \$4,779,000   | \$3,877,000  | \$111,089,000 | \$28,668,175 |
| <b>2002</b>   | \$2,025,000  | \$44,000,000  | \$292,000    | \$22,116,000  | \$32,287,377 |
| <b>2003</b>   | \$2,400,000  | \$49,870,000  | \$555,000    | \$25,322,000  | \$0          |
| <b>2004</b>   | \$2,676,000  | \$19,880,000  | \$11,234,000 | \$28,239,000  | \$0          |
| <b>2005</b>   | \$2,869,000  | \$29,760,000  | \$24,522,000 | \$34,024,000  | \$0          |
| <b>2006</b>   | \$2,926,000  | \$29,700,000  | \$10,915,000 | \$30,578,000  | \$0          |
| <b>2002-2006</b>  | \$12,896,000 | \$173,210,000 | \$47,518,000 | \$140,279,000 | \$32,287,377 |
| <b>2007</b>   | \$2,865,000  | \$17,600,000  | \$6,741,000  | \$257,146,000 | \$0          |
| <b>2008</b>   | \$1,550,000  | \$11,100,000  | \$10,709,000 | \$138,992,000 | n/a          |

## Sources

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