AFP inches closer to minimum defense posture, expects more deliveries

The Armed Forces of the Philippines is drawing closer to its projected minimum defense posture with the expected deliveries of more equipment under its modernization program.

Fourteen (14) projects worth PhP6.2 Billion are expected to be completed before the end of 2014. These include the delivery of assault rifles for the Philippine Army (PA) and Philippine Marines, additional UH-1H helicopters for the Philippine Air Force (PAF), close combat optics, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) equipment.

"We are getting closer to our desired state in terms of capability and readiness with our recent acquisitions, and those we are expecting to be delivered in the next few months," Defense Secretary Voltaire T. Gazmin said.

A total of thirty seven (37) projects have already been completed under the Aquino administration, amounting to PhP9.2 Billion.

As of July 8, 2014, 10 projects worth another PhP17.3 Billion are expected to be delivered in 2015. The major equipment to be delivered include armored vehicles for the PA, attack helicopters, combat utility helicopters, light lift and medium lift aircrafts for the PAF, and naval helicopters for the Philippine Navy (PN).

The first two (2) units of the 12 FA-50 lead-in fighter/trainers worth PhP18.9 Billion from South Korea are also expected to arrive next year.

The term "minimum credible defense posture" pertains to the establishment of an effective force presence inside the Philippines and its EEZ with exhibited competence to defend the country and protect its national interests if and when the need arises.

"This includes the ability to conduct wide surveillance and monitoring of developments within the country’s territory, and have an extensive command and control as well as the capacity to provide an expedient and efficient response to untoward incidents," Secretary Gazmin said.

The Defense Chief also emphasized that most of the equipment and assets acquired can be used in humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR).

The remaining projects in the modernization program are also in the advanced stages of procurement or are nearing completion. These include the additional rifles for the Army, frigates and amphibious assault vehicle for the Navy, and air defense surveillance radar for the Air Force.

The revised AFP modernization program for 2013-2017 has a budget of PhP 85.3 billion which will be spread out over a five-year period. From 2013-2017, PhP 8.6 billion will be allocated to the PA, PhP 43.3 billion to the PAF, PhP 28.2 billion to the PN and PhP 5.2 billion to the AFP GHQ. ###