PRESS RELEASE

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PH-US to resume talks on enhanced defense cooperation; humanitarian assistance and disaster response recognized as key provisions

MANILA, PHILIPPINES 09 2014 The Philippines and United States Negotiating Panels are set to resume discussions here on the proposed agreement on enhanced defense cooperation seen to further strengthen and reinvigorate the security partnership of the two treaty allies and to increase their capabilities to respond to natural and man-made calamities.

Both panels will meet on Thursday and Friday (10-11 April 2014) for the eighth round of negotiations.

Defense Undersecretary and Chair of the Philippine Negotiating Panel Pio Lorenzo Batino looked forward to productive discussions, citing further advancements on realizing the mutual commitment to strengthen their individual and collective defense capabilities achieved during the seventh round of negotiations held in Manila late March.

Undersecretary Batino also highlighted the “vital importance” of increasing capabilities to respond to natural and man-made calamities, referring to lessons learned from most recent experiences in the country and in the region.

“Calamities such as typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan as well as the ongoing search for the Malaysian Airlines plane underscore that friendly armed forces are in a unique and crucial position to provide timely responses in these events. Time is of the essence in these situations and, as often the first responders, friendly armed forces can provide much-needed human, technical and equipment assistance and support for the success of those efforts,” said Undersecretary Batino.

“Both the Philippines and the United States recognize this added key dimension to this updated framework of defense cooperation and we are working together for the realization of the full potentials of closer partnership in ensuring timely and adequate humanitarian assistance and disaster relief responses,” added Undersecretary Batino.
In addition to more expeditious humanitarian assistance and disaster response, Undersecretary Batino also highlighted other significant benefits from the agreement under negotiations, notably critical and timely support to the modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, achievement of the country’s minimum credible defense posture, and, provision of jobs and other economic opportunities through the local goods and supplies procurement that will be made by the United States military.

The other members of the Philippine Negotiating Panel are Ambassador Lourdes Yparraguirre, Ambassador J. Eduardo Malaya, DOJ Undersecretary Francisco Baraan III and DND Assistant Secretary for Strategic Assessments Raymund Jose Quilop