

# Press Releases: Joint Press Statement: U.S.-Philippines Bilateral Strategic Dialogue 2017

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 1, 2017

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The United States and the Republic of the Philippines held the seventh Bilateral Strategic Dialogue from November 30-December 1, 2017, in Washington, D.C. Acting Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Susan Thornton and Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs David Helvey co-led the U.S. delegation. Department of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Policy Enrique Manalo and Department of National Defense Undersecretary Ricardo David co-led the Philippine delegation.

The Bilateral Strategic Dialogue is a key mechanism for discussing the full range of political, security, and economic cooperation between the United States and the Philippines. Four working groups convened to develop action plans for expanding our joint partnership on Defense and Security; Economics, Development, and Prosperity; Regional and Global Diplomatic Engagement; and Rule of Law and Law Enforcement. The Joint Statement between the United States and the Philippines issued after the meeting in Manila of President Donald J. Trump and President Rodrigo R. Duterte on November 13, 2017 provided the guidance for the Dialogue.

During the Dialogue, senior officials discussed a wide variety of issues of mutual interest and reaffirmed their commitment to deepening collaboration in areas including maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster response, cybersecurity, countering transnational drug trafficking, countering terrorism, and improving drug prevention and treatment services, as well as combating wildlife trafficking and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. The senior officials further pledged to continue working together to effectively eliminate human trafficking. The U.S. and Philippine delegations emphasized the importance of the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. The United States congratulated the Philippines on defeating ISIS-supported terrorists in Mindanao and vowed to continue to support the fight against terrorism and the rehabilitation of Marawi.

The U.S. and Philippine delegations reaffirmed their commitment to deepening the extensive economic relationship between the two countries. Both sides noted the substantive discussions on cooperating in areas such as science & technology, agriculture and fisheries, and health and environment. They welcomed the bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) discussions held on November 29, and look forward to more robust discussions on ways to expand free, fair and reciprocal bilateral trade, including through exploring a potential Free Trade Agreement.

The United States and the Philippines discussed their shared concerns about security challenges in the region and pledged to work together to end North Korea's unlawful ballistic missile and nuclear programs, and the United States welcomed the Philippines' compliance with the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions. Both sides reiterated their commitment to uphold freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea in the South China Sea, and stressed the importance of peacefully resolving disputes in accordance with international law, as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention.

Both sides also expressed their desire to strengthen regional cooperation under the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership and in APEC, and decided to focus on action plans that would contribute to regional stability, economic integration, and connectivity. The United States congratulated the Philippines on its success as the 2017 ASEAN Chair and for hosting President Trump's successful visit to Manila.

The United States and the Philippines reaffirmed the importance of regular high-level consultations. The United States welcomed the Philippines' offer to host the next Bilateral Strategic Dialogue in Manila in 2018.

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## **[Press Releases: Designation of the Ross Sea Region Marine Protected Area](#)**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 1, 2017

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The Department of State welcomes today's entry into force of the Ross Sea Region Marine Protected Area, the world's largest marine protected area (MPA). The Ross Sea in Antarctica is an area of unique biodiversity and one of the last unspoiled marine environments on the planet. This MPA will create special long-term opportunities for protecting marine life and for promoting marine scientific research.

The Ross Sea MPA was a joint initiative of the United States and New Zealand, and was adopted by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) in October of 2016. It is 1.55 million square kilometers in size, about twice the size of the State of Texas.

For further information, contact [OES-PA-DG@state.gov](mailto:OES-PA-DG@state.gov). Follow the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs at @StateDeptOES.

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## **[Press Releases: Remarks With Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj Before Their Meeting](#)**

Remarks  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Treaty Room  
Washington, DC

December 1, 2017

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**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Good morning, all. I want to welcome Prime Minister Sarraj of Libya to the State Department, and his delegation. We're just delighted to have them here for some very important discussions today.

**PRIME MINISTER AL-SARRAJ:** Thank you.

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Welcome, Mr. Prime Minister.

**PRIME MINISTER AL-SARRAJ:** Thank you. I appreciate it.

**QUESTION:** (Off-mike.)

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary. Mr. Secretary –

**QUESTION:** Some in the White House say that they want you to resign. Can you just say something about how this is being handled and what you're going to do?

**QUESTION:** Secretary –

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** It's laughable. It's laughable.

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## **Press Releases: Central African Republic National Day**

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
December 1, 2017

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I extend my best wishes to the government and people of the Central African Republic on the occasion of your country's national day celebration.

The United States is proud to stand with the government and people of the Central African Republic and we support your courageous effort to create an inclusive society for all ethnic and religious groups. We are determined to support the work of government officials and civil society representatives as they work together to bring peace and security to the country.

May this year's celebration be a time of peace and unity for all the people of the Central African Republic.

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# Press Releases: Sports Envoys Alex Morgan and Servando Carrasco Visit Tanzania

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
November 30, 2017

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Olympic Gold Medalist and FIFA Women's World Cup champion Alex Morgan and Orlando City SC midfielder Servando Carrasco of Major League Soccer are traveling to Tanzania on December 2-9 as U.S. Department of State [Sports Envoys](#). The Sports Envoys are helping to bolster the United States' cultural and social ties with the youth of Tanzania, including the Maasai people living at the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro.

Additionally, Morgan and Carrasco will hold soccer clinics and speak with students from schools in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar. The Sports Envoys will also visit two all-girls soccer programs to highlight the importance of providing equal opportunities for all. Nike has donated soccer balls to schools and participants in support of this program.

This Sports Envoy program's focus on girls and women in sports also builds on the "Equal Playing Field" initiative, which in June 2017 saw 30 women from six continents, including previous U.S. Sports Envoy Lori Lindsey, play the world's highest soccer match at 18,747 feet (5,714 meters) on Mount Kilimanjaro.

Since 2003, the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has sent more than 250 U.S. athletes to more than 85 countries on Sports Envoy programs, which help reach overseas audiences that other forms of diplomatic engagement do not to promote collaboration on priority U.S. policy goals.

For press inquiries in the United States, contact [ECA-Press@state.gov](mailto:ECA-Press@state.gov). Follow the journey of the Alex Morgan and Servando Carrasco on Instagram ([@alexmorgan13](#) and [@serva5](#)) and Twitter ([@alexmorgan13](#), [@Serva\\_Carrasco](#), and [@AmEmbTZ](#)). To learn more about State Department sports diplomacy, follow the program on Twitter [@SportsDiplomacy](#).

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