

Filipino President Duterte: “Eventually I might, I will break up with America. I would rather go to Russia and to China.”

Duterte lashed out anew at the US and the European Union: If they wish “to withdraw aid, they should do so”

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“If you think it is high time for you guys to withdraw your assistance, go ahead, we will not beg for it,” Duterte said, adding he doesn’t expect the US, EU, and human rights group to understand his policy.

Philippines’ defence minister says military can cope without US aid

Lorenzana’s remarks suggest he is following other top government officials in rallying behind maverick president Duterte’s tough anti-US agenda.

US-Philippines ties are going through “bumps on the road” and the Philippine military could manage if Washington was to withdraw aid, the Philippines defence minister said on Friday.

The Philippines intended to buy arms from China and Russia and there had been no adverse reaction from within the military to president Rodrigo Duterte’s vows to scale back defence ties with the US, defence secretary Delfin Lorenzana said.

His remarks suggested he was following other top officials in Duterte’s administration in rallying behind the maverick president’s tough anti-US agenda after weeks of scrambling to manage the fallout from his outbursts and threats to downgrade the alliance.

Lorenzana had set a conciliatory tone on Wednesday, saying Duterte might have been misinformed when he said US-Philippine military exercises were no benefit to his country.

But on Friday he said the value of US military aid to the Philippines was “not that much”, and the military could ask Congress to make up for a shortfall of about \$50 million-\$100 million a year in US

military aid.

"We can live without [that]," Lorenzana told a foreign correspondents' forum.

Duterte, well known for a ruthless stand against crime from his years as mayor of a southern city, won election in May on a promise to wipe out drugs and drug dealers.

About 3,600 people have been killed in his anti-drugs drive and he has been enraged by questions about human rights, from the US and others, that the bloodshed has raised.

Duterte said on Thursday that if the US and European Union objected to his drugs war and wished to withdraw aid, they should do so, and the Philippines would not beg.

The US State Department spokesman John Kirby responded by saying that the total US assistance to the Philippines in the fiscal year that began on 1 October was \$180 million "and we're committed" to delivering that.

Lorenzana said he believed Duterte's objective was to diversify Philippines' foreign ties and cut dependency on its former colonial ruler.

"The president is trying to develop a relationship with the US that is not too dependent on one country," he said.

Duterte has caused a diplomatic storm by declaring that joint US-Philippines military exercises would cease, a defence agreement would be reviewed and, at an undisclosed time, he might "break up" with the US.

On Monday, Duterte said the US president, Barack Obama, should "go to hell".

Lorenzana said there had been no official directive to scrap a two-year-old Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement. He said the uncertainty in the US-Philippines relationship was "just going through these bumps on the road".

"Maybe we should re-assess [the relationship]," he said. "Are we benefiting, are we getting what we should be getting from alliance? It is part of this growing up."

He said Duterte was sensitive to concerns about his drugs war and it was likely the president would dial down his rhetoric if questions from the west about human rights stopped.

Asked how changes in the security relationship could affect a strategic US "rebalance" to Asia, he said: "They are not lacking of any place to park their ships if they are no longer allowed to park their ships here."

Lorenzana said there might be some issues of compatibility with defence procurements from Russia and China, which were willing to sell to the Philippines.

A Philippine dispute with China over sovereignty in the South China Sea would not impede defence procurements, he said, adding that there had been no discussion of the two countries working together militarily.

"All we are thinking now is buying equipment," he said. "No talks yet about military alliance. Just simple transaction of buying equipment."

Lorenzana's show of accord with Duterte's anti-US stand follows a similar tough line from the

foreign affairs secretary, Perfecto Yasay, who said this week Duterte wanted to liberate the country from a “shackling dependency” on the US.

Yasay said the president was “compelled to realign” Philippine foreign policy and not submit to US demands and interests.

Reuters

* “Philippines’ defence minister says military can cope without US aid”. *The Guardian*. Friday 7 October 2016 06.36 BST:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/07/philippines-defence-minister-says-military-can-cope-without-us-aid>

Philippines: Duterte dares US, EU to withdraw aid

Tough-talking leader says the country won’t beg for foreign assistance after criticism over his deadly drug campaign.

President Rodrigo Duterte has told the United States and the European Union to “go ahead” and withdraw financial aid to the Philippines if they’re unhappy with his bloody anti-drug war.

“Go away, bring your money to somewhere else. We will survive as a nation,” Duterte said in a speech to police officers on Thursday in the southern city of Butuan [1].

“How do you look at us, mendicants? We will survive. Even if we’ll go through hardships, we will survive. But we will never, never compromise our dignity.” If you think it is high time for you guys to withdraw your assistance, go ahead, we will not beg for it,” Duterte said, adding he doesn’t expect the US, EU, and human rights group to understand his policy.

More than 3,680 people have been killed by police and unidentified attackers in the Philippines since June 30, when Duterte took office.

Last week, two US senators raised alarms about the mounting death toll linked to the anti-drug war, and called for a review of American foreign aid to the Philippines.

Senator Ben Cardin said what Duterte is advocating and endorsing “amounts to mass murder” [2].

Senator Patrick Leahy said: “No amount of killing will result in reforms that improve the judiciary, end corruption and impunity in law enforcement, or rehabilitate those caught in the vicious cycle of addiction.”

According to US data, the Philippines is expected to receive a total of \$188m in 2017 [3]. In 2015, the country received \$236m in US aid.

Meanwhile, the annual EU assistance to the Philippines is estimated at \$65m [4].

In an interview with *Al Jazeera*, Phelim Kine of Human Rights Watch warned that foreign aid to the Philippines could go into funding “mass unlawful violence” by authorities [5].

But in defending his police on Thursday, Duterte said foreign governments “will never understand the pain that we are suffering.” “We have a problem here trying to preserve our society,” the president, nicknamed “The Punisher”, said.

‘America has failed us’

Duterte’s statements follow a Facebook post by his foreign minister, Perfecto Yasay, who wrote that the president wants to liberate the Philippines from a “shackling dependency” on the US.

In the post titled AMERICA HAS FAILED US, Yasay said Duterte was “compelled to realign” Philippine foreign policy and not submit to US demands and interests [6].

“Breaking away from the shackling dependency of the Philippines to effectively address both internal and external security threats has become imperative in putting an end to our nation’s subservience to United States interests,” Yasay wrote.

Rodrigo Duterte: Guns, goons and the presidency - 101 East

He said in the South China Sea, the US could not guarantee it would help the Philippines to protect its sovereignty, as it is bound to by a 1951 bilateral treaty.

“Worse is that our only ally could not give us the assurance that in taking a hard line towards the enforcement of our sovereignty rights under international law, it will promptly come to our defence under our existing military treaty and agreements.”

On Monday, Duterte said US President Barack Obama should “go to hell” and hinted he might “break up” with the United States.

Molly Koscina, a spokeswoman for the US embassy, said Yasay’s comments ran counter to close relations between the two countries.

“We have seen the post. We’ve already spoken to this sort of rhetoric,” Koscina told reporters. “Frankly, it seems at odds with the warm relationship that exists between the Filipino and American people.”

Source: Al Jazeera News And Agencies

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<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/philippines-duterte-dares-eu-withdraw-aid-161006134133162.html>

Duterte tells Obama to ‘go to hell’

Philippine president suggests he may eventually “break up with America” after US criticises his bloody anti-drug war.

Philippine leader Rodrigo Duterte has told President Barack Obama to “go to hell” in response to the US leader’s criticism of his deadly anti-drug campaign, suggesting he may eventually decide to “break up with America”.

"Instead of helping us, the first to criticise is this State Department, so you can go to hell, Mr Obama, you can go to hell," Duterte said in a speech on Tuesday.

His anti-drug crackdown has left more than an estimated 3,000 suspected drug dealers dead in just three months, alarming the United Nations, the EU, the United States, and human rights groups.

Duterte outlined his disappointment with the US, which has asked his government to stop the widespread killings and questioned whether human rights are being violated.

The United States, he said, had refused to sell some weapons to his country, but he did not care because Russia and China were willing suppliers.

"If you don't want to sell arms, I'll go to Russia. I sent the generals to Russia and Russia said 'do not worry, we have everything you need, we'll give it to you'," said Duterte.

"And as for China, they said 'just come over and sign and everything will be delivered'."

The White House said on Tuesday it has not been formally notified about changes in bilateral ties.

"The diplomatic lines of communication between the United States and the Philippines remain open," said White House spokesman Josh Earnest. "We have not yet received any sort of formal communication ... about making substantial changes to our bilateral relationship."

The response came shortly after Duterte said without elaborating: "Eventually I might, in my time, I will break up with America. I would rather go to Russia and to China."

'Hell is filled up'

He also lashed out anew at the European Union, saying the bloc, which has also criticised his brutal crackdown, "better choose purgatory, hell is filled up".

Since becoming president in June, Duterte has had an uneasy relationship with the US and with Obama, and has declared intentions to bolster relations with China and Russia as he revamps Philippine foreign policy that has long leaned on Washington.

Last month, Obama cancelled a planned first meeting with Duterte on the sidelines of an Asian summit in Laos after the Filipino leader blurted "son of a bitch" in warning the US leader not to lecture him on human rights ahead of their meeting.

Duterte later expressed regrets over his remarks.

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<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/philippines-duterte-tells-obama-hell-161004144441736.html>

Footnotes

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7hkSLaiOAY>

[2] <https://www.leahy.senate.gov/press/senator-patrick-leahy-and-senator-benjamin-cardin-on-rec>

[ent-developments-in-the-philippines-and-indonesia](#)

[3] <http://beta.foreignassistance.gov/explore>

[4] <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/820933/despite-lashing-from-duterte-eu-gives-funds-for-drug-rehab-in-ph>

[5] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78Cc-7WtUhs>

[6] <https://www.facebook.com/perfectoyasayjr/posts/1436259099723852>