



PRESS RELEASE

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PH, US conclude joint drill on counter-terrorism



US Ambassador Sung Kim and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana give statements on Tempest Wind 2017.

The Philippines and the United States recently concluded a successful counter-terrorism drill held from 18 to 26 September 2017 in the Philippines and Hawaii. Dubbed as *Tempest Wind 2017*, the drill was a bilateral, ‘whole of government’ effort on crisis management, counter-terrorism and security operations from both countries.

In a press conference held in Camp Aguinaldo to culminate the activity, Defense Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana and US Ambassador Sung Y. Kim emphasized the policy points of the partnership between the countries, manifested through the conduct of *Tempest Wind* in the Philippines this year.

“It is now necessary, more than ever, that all countries come together to unite against terrorism and violent extremism. The global war on terror cannot succeed if we do not explore avenues for cooperation and mutual exchanges,” Secretary Lorenzana said. He also explained that the drill was designed to provide realistic scenarios focused on aircraft hijacking and hostage-taking incidents.

Ambassador Kim further noted that *Tempest Wind 2017* was an unprecedented opportunity for comprehensive training on many levels, ranging from agency leaders and action officers to the operatives who do frontline work in defending national security.



Representatives of the Department of National Defense, US State Department and US Embassy in Manila

Representatives from the Department of National Defense, the US Department of State, and the US Embassy in Manila provided a brief on how the management of the drill involved both high-level decision-making and tactical operations response.

“*[Tempest Wind 2017]* is primarily a test of our incident command system, management structures, and protocols to be used in the event of an incident that involves our countries. Coordination is very important,” DND Spokesperson Dir. Arsenio Andolong explained.

The eight-day drill strengthened communications between both countries and the operational capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, as well as improved its coordination with other concerned Philippine agencies in preparation for possible security crises.

Tempest Wind 2017 as an operation had been evolving over the past few months to provide a venue and an opportunity to increase both governments’ coordination and cooperation at not just on a tactical basis but that of a ‘whole of government’ approach to crisis resolution, according to the representatives from the US government.

AFP Public Affairs Chief COL Edgard Arevalo also emphasized the drill’s focus on the AFP’s preparedness to address threats similar to the scenario in any part of the country, as well as the effectiveness of interagency coordination and communication in dealing with possible terror threats.

Secretary Lorenzana noted that terrorism is an urgent and widespread issue that must be immediately addressed. “As a community of nations, we must all do our fair share since these problems go beyond borders and national boundaries. Violence in one country can spread to another, with far reaching consequences in regional peace, security, and trade,” he added.

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