



PRESS RELEASE

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PH, Vietnam vow to strengthen naval cooperation

Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, 26 October 2017 - Vowing to further strengthen defense relations, particularly naval cooperation, the Defense chiefs of the Philippines and Vietnam held a bilateral meeting today.

Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana and Vietnamese Minister of National Defense Ngo Xuan Lich discussed possible ways to enhance both countries' defense cooperation that has significantly improved since 2010 and greatly benefited both countries in the past few years.

Having discussed the recent unfortunate incident off the coast of Pangasinan involving a Philippine Navy vessel and Vietnamese fishermen that resulted in the loss of lives, Sec. Lorenzana extended his sincere apologies to General Lich.

Sec. Lorenzana also relayed President Rodrigo Duterte's assurance that the families of the Vietnamese fishermen who died in the incident will be properly compensated. He added that the Philippine Navy personnel are being investigated by the concerned authorities. The Philippine Defense chief assured his Vietnamese counterpart that the case will be expediently resolved in a manner that is satisfactory to all parties.

In response, General Lich suggested the establishment of a concrete mechanism between the navies of both countries to prevent a similar incident from happening in the future to which Sec. Lorenzana agreed.

"Our Defense cooperation with Vietnam has been very positive and we intend to build on those successes," Sec. Lorenzana. Noting how Vietnam was able to develop its own military industry, Sec. Lorenzana added that the Philippines may also consider tap the expertise of Vietnam in developing the country's defense industry.

Also discussed in the meeting were the possibility of increasing the existing opportunities for exchange of senior and junior officers, information and intelligence exchange, joint training, and addressing non-traditional security challenges such as humanitarian assistance and disaster response, piracy, illegal drugs, and terrorism.

Agreeing to move forward with the Defense talks, both Defense chiefs have delegated senior defense officials from both parties to coordinate more closely and discuss the specific details.

Describing his bilateral meeting with his Vietnamese counterpart, Secretary Lorenzana "We have meeting of minds to move forward, and this will be beneficial to both countries." ###