

USA in Philippines

Description

Buildup of our Asian Frontline

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Philippines President **Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.** visited USA President **Joe Biden** in Washington, D.C., May 1, 2023

Marcos Election Brings Back a PH Dynasty

Former PH Pres **Rodrigo Duterte**, 2016-2022 soured USA relations with his response to Pres. **Barack Obama's** expressed concern over human right issues related to Duterte's **War on Criminality and Drugs**. During a press conference Duterte infamously called Obama "a son of a whore," resulting in a canceled meeting between the two leaders during the **2016 ASEAN Summit** held in Laos.

[1] Barack Obama cancels meeting after Philippines president calls him 'son of a whore'. The

Guardian. ISSN 0261-3077

Duterte later said following the 2016 U.S. presidential election that he will stop quarrels with the US following Pres. **Donald Trump's** victory. Duterte's daughter, **Sara Duterte** joined as Vice-President candidate with son of the former dictator in 2022 to win election on a Unity Platform. She is also now ***PH Secretary of Education*** as well as VP.

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This construction worker in February of 2024 still wears one of the Unity Ticket outfits from the 2022 campaign.

Pres. Duterte's strategic pivot of Philippines toward stronger relations with China was arrested by election of Marcos Jr. The result is a stronger USA presence in our former colony and a blusterier China threatening most of its neighbors—and particularly Philippines.

[2] Marcos Eyes Stronger ties with US, The Manila Times, September 21, 2022



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This writer has written about how this relationship change impacts Alaska. The international drama continues to this day and at some point Alaska, or USA, will have to decide whether China is a good place to sell our natural resources.

[3] **Is China Bluffing?** DONN LISTON 11/24/2023

Stated Goals of U.S. Assistance to Philippines

According to the US Department of State:

The U.S. government's goals in the Philippines are to strengthen democratic governance and support Philippine government efforts to promote inclusive development and contribute to security and development cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. U.S. assistance to the Philippines helps expand inclusive, market-driven growth; foster strong democratic systems and good economic, health, and education governance; promote responsible natural resource management; and enhance resilience for communities and the environment.

Key imports from the Philippines are semiconductor devices and computer peripherals, automobile parts, electric machinery, textiles and garments, wheat and animal feeds, coconut oil, and information technology/business process outsourcing services. Key U.S. exports to the Philippines are agriculture goods, machinery, cereals, raw and semi-processed materials for the manufacture of semiconductors, electronics, and transport equipment. The two countries have a bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, signed in 1989, and a tax treaty.

[4] **US Relations with the Philippines**, US Department of STATE, February 23, 2023

All of this is occurring with a **China Communist Party (CCP)** convinced it can overwhelm the region economically and stand up to longstanding western dominance with its manufacturing force. As I have written about before, this rivalry has major implications for Alaska.

In 2011 Alaska exports to China totaled nearly \$1.5 Billion, and China became our leading export destination, surpassing Japan who had been our number one export destination since statehood in 1959. Annual exports to China were \$1 Billion in 2017, according to Alaska Business Magazine. From the late 1970s to about 2015 China averaged 10% GDP growth annually but now is in decline.

[5] **Alaska and China; Ties between the Middle Kingdom and Great Land**, *Alaska Business Magazine*, Greg Wolf, February 2019

The China Bully in Asia

Mexico and Canada have moved to the top exporters of goods to USA in the first half of this year, as economic decoupling between the two superpowers reduces China's exports to USA by 25% for the first time in 15 years. China exports to Philippines have shown a steady increase over the last decade, reaching \$64.68 Billion in 2022, while China Imports from Philippines continue to decline.

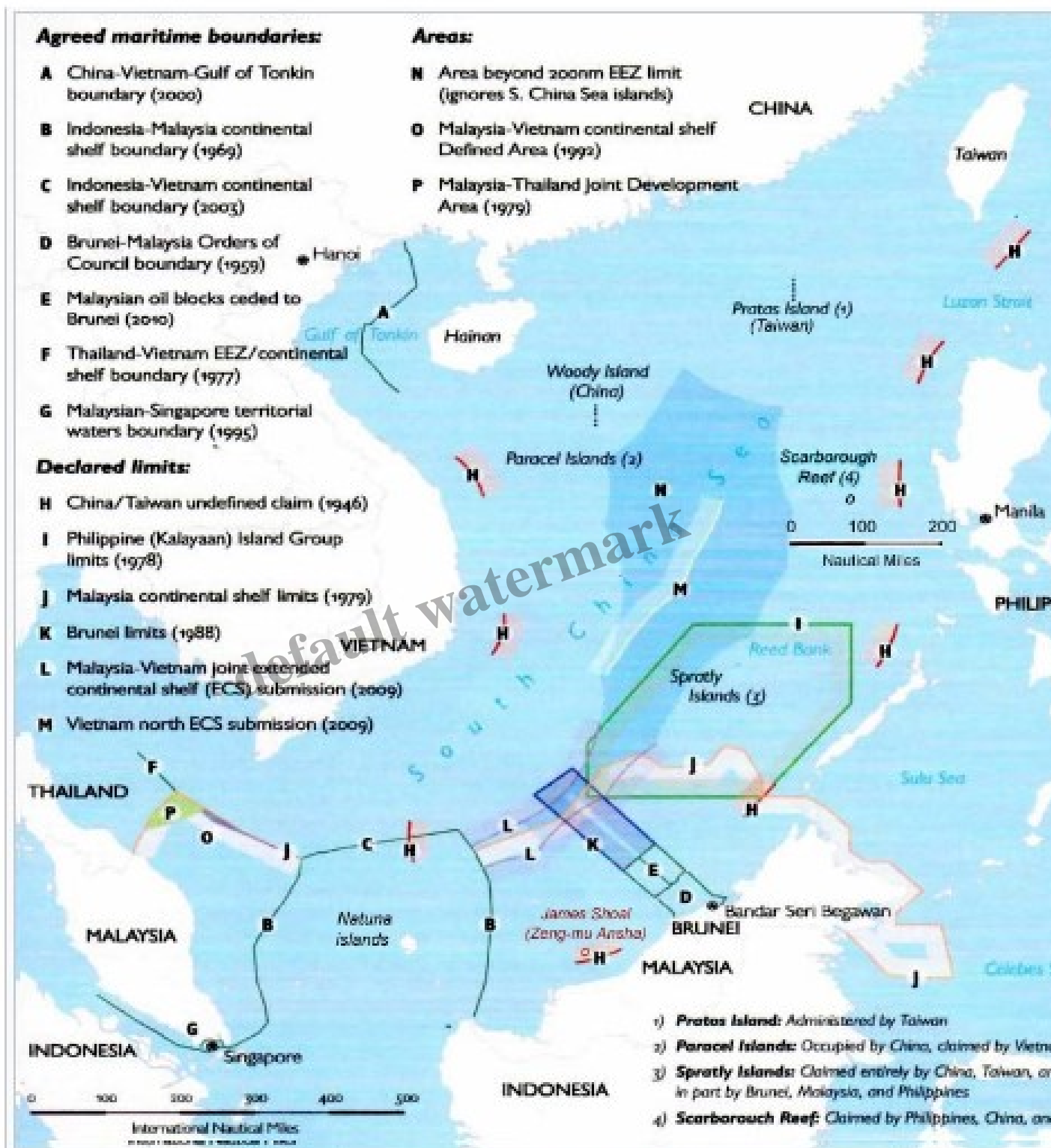
This may be retaliation for Philippines' continued insistence that certain islands in the South China Sea do, in fact belong to them legally, as was determined in a 2016 arbitration which China now dismisses.

[6] **Alaska Joins Philippines-China Love/Hate Relationship** DONN LISTON August 24, 2023



On 12 July 2016, the Arbitral Tribunal constituted under the **1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, issued a final Award on the case initiated by the Philippines against China concerning the maritime disputes in the West Philippine Sea / South China Sea.

Key findings of the Award:



South China Sea claims and agreements (showing the nine-dash line as well as an additional tenth dash near the island of Taiwan).

On China's Historic Rights within the Nine-Dash Line

The Arbitral Tribunal ruled that China's historic claims, sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction in waters situated within its "nine-dash line" are contrary to the UNCLOS. **These claims exceed the geographic and substantive limits of China's maritime entitlements provided for by the Convention.**

On Traditional Fishing at Scarborough (Panatag) Shoal

The Arbitral Tribunal found that Scarborough (Panatag) Shoal is a traditional fishing ground for many nationalities, including those in the Philippines, China (including Taiwan), and Vietnam. **The Tribunal also declared that China's operation of official vessels at Scarborough Shoal from May 2012 onwards unlawfully prevented Filipino fisherfolk from exercising their traditional fishing rights at the Shoal.**

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On the Protection of the Marine Environment

China's construction of artificial islands, installations, and structures, and land reclamation activities at seven (7) features of the Spratly Islands caused severe and irreplaceable harm to the coral reef environment. **Such activities also damaged the marine environment in the South China Sea.**

On the Status of Features

The Arbitral Tribunal ruled that high-tide elevations do not generate an entitlement to a 200-nautical mile (NM) exclusive economic zone and continental shelf. These features can only generate a 12 NM territorial sea. The following are features in the South China Sea declared to be high-tide elevations: Scarborough (Panatag) Shoal, McKennan (Chigua) Reef, Cuarteron (Calderon) Reef, Fiery Cross (Kagitingan) Reef, Johnson (Mabini) Reef, and Gaven (Burgos) Reef (North).

Meanwhile, low-tide elevations do not generate an entitlement to a territorial sea, exclusive economic zone, or continental shelf. Per the Arbitration Award, the following are declared to be low-tide elevations: Hughes Reef, Gaven Reef (South), Subi (Zamora) Reef, Mischief (Panganiban) Reef, and Second Thomas (Ayungin) Shoal.

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Aside from being declared as low-tide elevations, the Award also affirmed that Mischief (Panganiban) Reef and Second Thomas (Ayungin) Shoal are within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone and continental shelf. Furthermore, **China's construction of artificial islands at Mischief (Panganiban) Reef without the authorization of the Philippines breached the Convention and the Philippines' sovereign rights in its exclusive economic zone and continental shelf.**

The Award also affirmed that there are no overlapping exclusive economic zone and continental shelf with respect to Mischief (Panganiban) Reef and Second Thomas (Ayungin) Shoal, including Scarborough (Panatag) Shoal, and the Philippine archipelago.

The Tribunal held that none of the high-tide features located in the Spratly Islands are fully-entitled islands, thus, they do not generate entitlements to an exclusive economic zone or continental shelf.

[7] Foreign Service Institute Key Findings

States Positively Acknowledging the Arbitration Award of 12 July 2016



Bosnia and Herzegovina



European Union



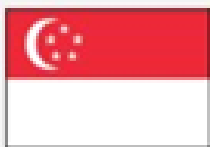
Indonesia



Malaysia



Myanmar



Singapore



Vietnam

[8] Foreign Service Institute-States Positively Acknowledging

Philippine Buildup to Protect USA Vested Interests in Asia



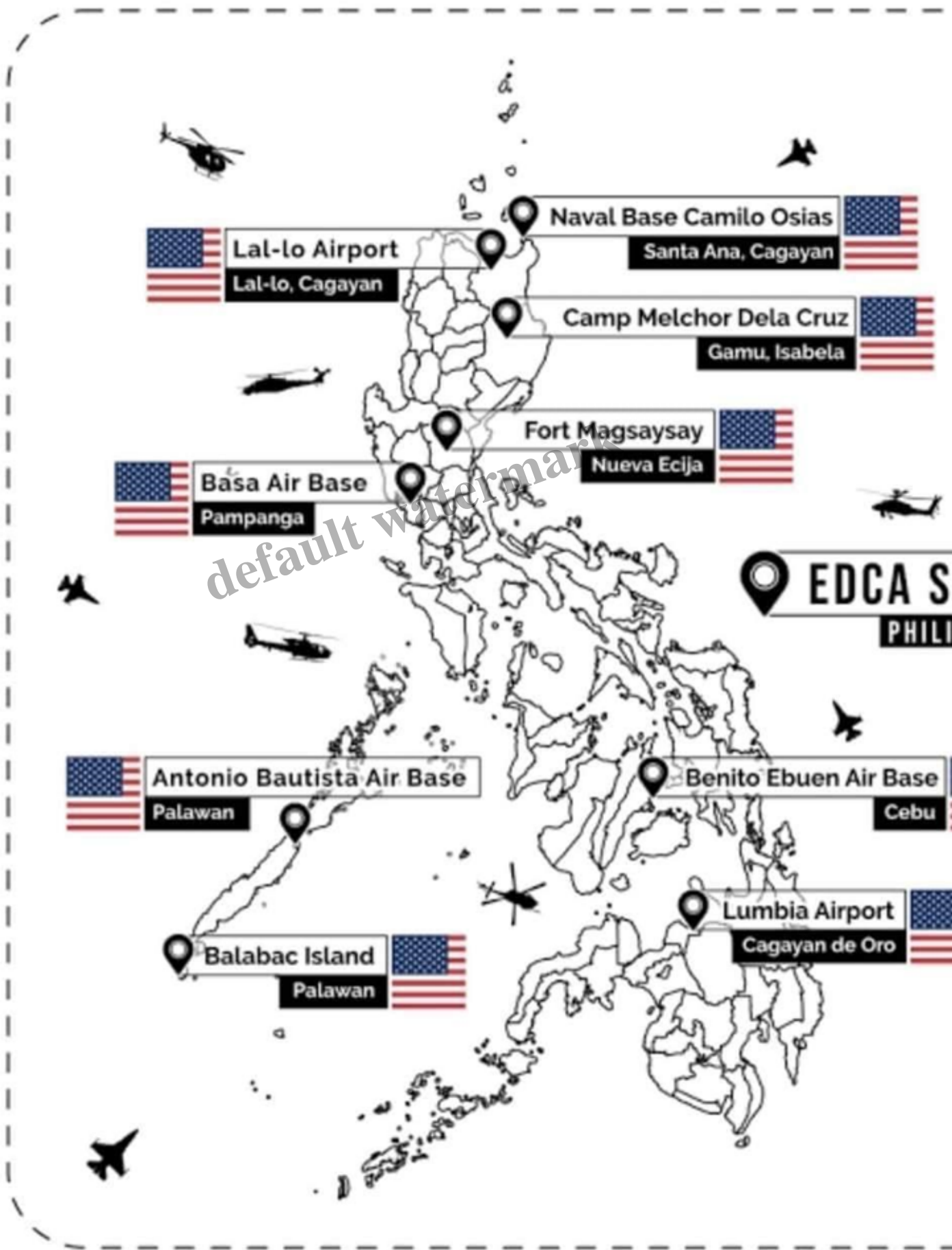
Specifically, the strategy includes the following identified vital interests: 1. Free and Open, 2. Connected, 3. Prosperous, 4. Secure, 5. Resilient. To see what that means go to the link in References.

[9] USAID Statement of Biden Administration

Direct Support to Philippines

The Mutual Defense Treaty between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America, was signed August 30, 1951. EDCA is an agreement between the Philippines and the United States which is envisioned to advance the implementation of the Philippine-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT).

[10] USA-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaties



The five initial EDCA sites are the **Cesar Basa Air Base** in Floridablanca, Pampanga; **Fort Magsaysay Military Reservation** in Nueva Ecija; **Lumbia Airport** in Cagayan De Oro; **Antonio Bautista Air Base** in Puerto Princesa, Palawan; and **Benito Ebuena Air Base** in Cebu.

Meanwhile, the additional four sites are **Naval Base Camilo Osias** in Sta. Ana, Cagayan; **Lal-lo Airport** in Lal-lo Cagayan; **Camp Melchor Dela Cruz** in Gamu, Isabela; and **Balabac Island** in Palawan.

[11]EDCA sites vital for humanitarian aid, disaster relief – US admiral, Philippine News Agency, Priam Nepomuceno, September 14, 2023



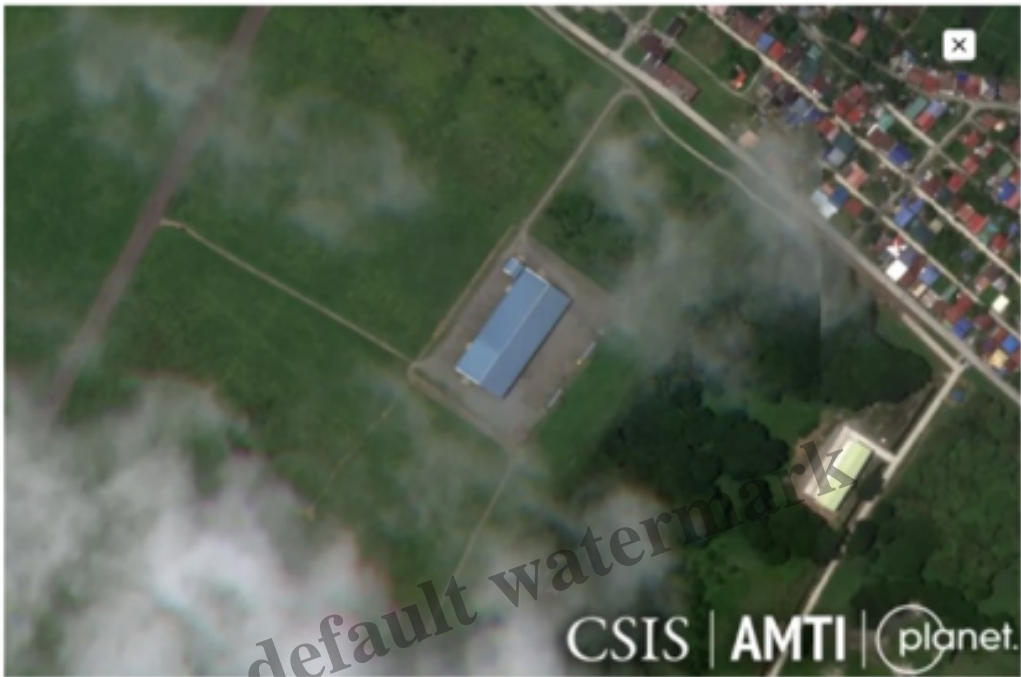
To better understand the potential utility of U.S.-funded Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) sites at Philippine military bases, AMTI has combined public reporting on official EDCA projects with satellite imagery analysis of all nine sites. The resulting catalogue of completed, in-progress, and planned facility upgrades provides a more robust picture of the capabilities that the EDCA sites would offer U.S. and Philippine forces in a contingency. It also reveals that while progress on EDCA implementation was brought to a standstill during the prior administration of **Rodrigo Duterte**, the Philippine military undertook significant infrastructure upgrades at the five bases designated as EDCA sites in 2016.

[12] More than Meets the Eye: Philippine Upgrades at EDCA Sites, Asia Maritime Transportation Initiative, October 12, 2023

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Basa Air Base

Basa Air Base, situated in the province of Pampanga on the island of Luzon, has received more U.S. funding for infrastructure improvements than any other EDCA site to-date. As of March, \$66.57 million had been allocated for a range of improvement projects, including a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) warehouse, command and control infrastructure, fuel storage, runway improvements, and aircraft parking.



[12] More than Meets the Eye: Philippine Upgrades at EDCA Sites, Asia Maritime Transportation Initiative, Center for Strategic International Studies, October 12, 2023

There is no question that USA is investing in Military-grade development in Philippines, across from Taiwan, where a festering Taiwan Independence Movement has opposed China reunification OR the current status quo for decades.

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Taiwan's political status is ambiguous. China claims it is a province of the People's Republic of China (PRC), whereas the **Tsai Ing-wen** administration of Taiwan maintains that Taiwan is already an independent country as the **Republic of China (ROC)** and thus does not have to push for any sort of formal independence. As such, the ROC consisting *Taiwan and other islands under its control* already conducts official diplomatic relations with and is recognized by 12 member states of the **United Nations** and the **Holy See**.

[13] Taiwan Official Website explanation

This must be concerning to any American who watched Pres. **Lyndon Johnson** talk out both sides of his mouth about American involvement in Vietnam, to then see USA's utter defeat in that war. America

has also lost Pres. Johnson's **War on Poverty** declared in January of 1964. 20% of Americans were determined by the US Government to be living below poverty level then.

When President Johnson launched the War on Poverty, he wanted to give the poor a "hand up, not a hand out." He stated that his war would shrink welfare rolls and turn the poor from "taxeaters" into "taxpayers." Johnson's aim was to make poor families self-sufficient – able to rise above poverty through their own earnings without dependence on welfare.

The exact opposite happened. For a decade and a half before the War on Poverty began, self-sufficiency in American improved dramatically. But for the last 45 years, there has been no improvement at all. Many groups are less capable of self-support today than when Johnson's war started.

[14] The War on Poverty: 50 Years of Failure, The Heritage Foundation, Robert Rector, Sep 23, 2014

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PostCards from Philippines (What I did this Winter!)



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Today a new Democrat President is defying the US Supreme court, paying college tuition costs to create new dependencies, increasing the National deficit and cutting the defense budget, while ramping up foreign infrastructure for war.

WASHINGTON, Jan 13 (Reuters) – U.S. President Joe Biden said on Saturday the United States does not support the independence of Taiwan, after Taiwanese voters rebuffed China and gave the ruling party a third presidential term.

Earlier in the day, the Taiwanese ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) presidential candidate Lai Ching-te came to power, [strongly rejecting](#) Chinese pressure to spurn him, and pledged both to stand up to Beijing and seek talks.

"We do not support independence..." Biden said, when asked for reaction to Saturday's elections.

[15] Biden: US does Not Support Independence for Taiwan

Cold comfort to the world that USA doesn't jump into another conflict in the face of Biden's disastrous administration; but merely making that declaration could mean this administration is actually doing the exact opposite.

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1. Life in Philippines

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