

Q. [Inaudible]

President Bush. Good question. I hope by December 1st.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Abu Sayyaf Group, Muslim separatists operating in the southern Philippines.

Joint Statement Between President George W. Bush and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines on the 50th Anniversary of the U.S.-Philippine Alliance
November 20, 2001

The United States and the Republic of the Philippines today commemorated the 50th anniversary of the signing of the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty, during the visit of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to Washington, D.C.

On this historic occasion, the two Presidents reaffirmed that U.S.-Philippine relations are based on shared history, common values, a commitment to freedom and democracy, and vigorous economic ties. They observed that our alliance is an alliance between two peoples, with 120,000 Americans resident in the Philippines and over two million Americans of Filipino descent living in the United States. Presidents Bush and Macapagal-Arroyo asserted that the strong historical, cultural and personal links between the Philippine and American people will continue to keep our alliance strong and vital in a changing world.

In commemorating the anniversary, President Bush acknowledged the brave contribution that Filipino Veterans of World War II have made to freedom and democracy, and stated that he will carefully consider all legislative proposals to ensure the sacrifices of these veterans are recognized.

President Bush and President Macapagal-Arroyo agreed that the Mutual Defense Treaty has been vital in advancing peace and stability in the Asia Pacific for the past half a century. They noted that the alliance remains a pillar of the U.S. security presence in Asia, which helps preserve a strategic balance that favors freedom and promotes prosperity throughout the region. The two lead-

ers further agreed that the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, and the terrorist activities of the Abu Sayyaf Group or ASG (which now hold both Filipino and American hostages in the southern Philippines), underscore the urgency of ensuring that the two countries maintain a robust defense partnership into the 21st century.

To further this goal, the two leaders underscored their determination to strengthen their military alliance on a sustained basis, through increased training, exercises, and other joint activities. President Bush thanked President Macapagal-Arroyo for her uncompromising leadership in the global campaign against terror and expressed deep appreciation for the moral support and assistance her government has provided the United States in its time of need. The two Presidents declared that the American and Filipino people stand together in the global campaign against terrorism. Noting that the future peace and prosperity of the world are at stake in the current conflict, both leaders renewed their commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance and expressed confidence that the international coalition will emerge victorious over the forces of terror.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement Between the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines

November 20, 2001

President George W. Bush and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo today reaffirmed the strength and warmth of bilateral relations and commemorated the 50th anniversary of the signing of the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty. While celebrating the achievements of half a century of defense cooperation, the two Presidents agreed that the alliance remains vital to both nations, particularly in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

President Bush conveyed his deep appreciation for President Macapagal-Arroyo's leadership in the fight against terror, both within the southern Philippines and against